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COMMENTARY

ON

ECCLESIASTES,

WITH OTHER TREATISES.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

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INTRODUCTION.

It is of great importance accurately to determine the circumstances of the time at which this Book was written. In this way, not only will a sure foundation be laid for investigations respecting its authorship, but a point be secured from which we may start in endeavouring to unfold its meaning. For this latter purpose the inquiry is a specially pertinent one, inasmuch as the book evidently, in the first instance, took its occasion from passing events, was addressed to a particular generation of men, and intended for their admonition and comfort.

The Author has studiously maintained a certain tone of reserve in respect of the circumstances of his time; and of design rather glanced at them, than entered into details. This explains why so many false views have been entertained of the situation of affairs, to the great prejudice of the interpretation and practical application of the book. He had two reasons for restricting himself to bare allusions to the events of his time. In the first place, he felt that though writing primarily for his own generation, his book was destined to form part of the Canonical Scriptures, and, consequently, to be of service to the Church of God in all ages. This consciousness he gives express utterance to in chap. xii. 11: "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd." This being the case, the writer would naturally endeavour to give prominence to that which was general and eternal in its character, over that which was special and temporary, only lightly glancing at the latter, in order that his teachings might be easier of universal application. The Psalms were generally composed on the same principle. Though connected with, and owing

their origin to certain historical events, as a general rule they allude so sparingly and gently to actual occurrences, that a microscopical investigation is required to bring them out with any degree of clearness, precision and fulness. A second reason for his reticence is expressly assigned by the Author himself in chap. x. 20: "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought: and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall carry the matter." According to this, it would seem to have been dangerous for the Hebrews to use plain language concerning things, because of the numerous spies and informers employed by their tyrannical heathen rulers. Despite this reserve, however, by gathering up and combining scattered traits we may form a tolerably accurate and complete picture of the period to which the book of Ecclesiastes owes its origin.

First of all, let us bring into view the detached and fragmentary hints which the work itself gives relative to the external circumstances of the people of God at the time of its composition.

Evidently they were in a state of deep misery, and had fallen a prey to vanity; for in chap. i. 2-11, the writer holds up to the view of his nation the worthlessness of this entire earthly existence, intending thus to bring his fellow-countrymen to regard the wretched lot under which they were groaning in a more favourable light. If misery is the destined portion of man, if man is born to evil, as it is said in Job v. 7, it surely cannot be of great consequence whether his lot be a shade brighter or a shade darker. For one whose sufferings are peculiarly severe, there is sweet consolation in the thought, that to a certain extent, or rather, that in all the essential characteristics of his condition, all men are his associates. If all is vanity, why need we vex ourselves so much about having a handful or so more of it?

This was a time when all the splendour of the age of Solomon had passed away: for, from chap. i. 12, to the end of chap. ii., the writer labours to show that that also was vanity, hoping thus to console and tranquillise under their loss, the minds of those who were consuming themselves with looking back upon, and yearning for bygone glories. Vanished also was the radiant wisdom of the generation of Solo-

mon; for in chap. i. 12-18, those are cheered who were bewailing the past: vanished, according to chap. ii., were its great works and projects, its rich possessions, its brilliant relations, its glorious and joyous life, for the author takes the greatest pains to show that it was all "vanity and vexation of spirit," to the end, that the people might feel less keenly its present lack of wealth and enjoyment.

From chap. iii. 1-15, we learn that for Israel there had begun a time of death, of the uprooting of what was planted, of the breaking down of what was built up, of mourning, a time when God had gone far away from them and withdrawn His help and grace. The nation was persecuted, was being tried in the furnace of affliction, was under the dominion of heathen rulers.

Chap. iv. 1-3, teaches us that the earth was then a scene of injustice and of violence: the times were such as to force on men's minds the thought that it is better to die than to live, nay more, that it had been best never to have been born. In chap. iv. 4-6, the writer seeks to console his miserable fellow-countrymen by the consideration that, at all events, they have not to bear the heavy burden of envy. This consolation implies of course, that they were in anything but an enviable condition. According to chap. iv. 7-12, Israel was then a poor people in contrast with their rich heathen tyrants. The object of the author in pointing this out was to lead his nation to form a just estimate of that which the heathen possessed, and of which they were destitute, to counteract the envy of the riches of the world to which their own circumstances rendered them so liable. From the 7th to the 12th verse, he consoles the people in their beggary for the loss of their possessions; from the 13th to the 16th verse, in their bondage for their loss of liberty.

The heathen tyranny under which the people of God lay groaning, constitutes the point of departure for chap. v. 7-8. According to ver. 7, the Inheritance of the Lord, destined originally to universal dominion, but now degraded to the rank of a mere province, was the scene of oppression of the poor and of perversion of justice and judgment.

In chap. v. 9-19, and chap. vi., the nation, sighing beneath the extortions of the Gentiles, is again comforted for the loss

of earthly good; the rich man represents the Gentile, the poor man Israel.

According to chap. vii. Israel was then in the house of mourning, the heathen, on the contrary, sat in the house of feasting (ver. 2), in the house of mirth (ver. 4), had the upper hand, and were floating on a sea of pleasures and delights (ver. 5). The times were such as to incline men strongly to deem the day of death better than the day of birth (ver. 1). These were times when men asked, "What is the cause that the former days were better than these?" (ver. 10)—when Israel was compelled to listen to the rebukes of the wise, who took occasion from their misery to reproach them for their sins (ver. 5)—when the temptation to cherish a bitter and discontented spirit lay especially near (ver. 9)—when there was abundant opportunity of exercising the virtue of patience (ver. 8)—when no signs were discernible of the victory over the world promised to the Church of God, but in that respect it was left entirely to faith and hope (ver. 6, 8). According to verses 11, 12, Israel was then without possessions, and had fallen into the hands of death. Every other portion which should belong, and once had belonged to the people of God, was now taken away, and it was reduced to the one inheritance of the wisdom coming from above—an inheritance, however, the author teaches, which must bring all other blessings in its train, inasmuch as it was itself the good of chief value at that time. In verses 19 and 20, also, power is represented as being entirely on the side of the heathen, whilst to Israel there remained only its inalienable prerogative and birthright of wisdom. Verses 15-18 complain that Israel is unfortunate, despite its righteousness, and that, on the contrary, the heathens, or the heathen tyrants, are fortunate, notwithstanding their wickedness. According to verses 21 and 22 Israel was forced to listen without reply to the curses and slanders heaped upon them by the Gentiles; and those held the upper hand who, of right, and by God's ordination, should have been the bondsmen of the nation which, from its very commencement, was exalted to the throne of the world.

From chap. viii. 9 we learn that it was a time when "one man ruled over other men to their hurt"—when the wicked had in their possession Jerusalem, "the place of the holy"

(ver. 10)—when this state of things had already lasted long (ver. 12)—when the earnestly expected decree of their heavenly king against the usurpers had been long delayed (ver. 11). (Throughout the entire book no other king than the heavenly one is spoken of as their own; and it is a very characteristic feature that He is without hesitation designated "*the king*" (viii. 2). Everywhere the Gentiles are introduced as holding external earthly rule over the people of God.)

The commencement of chap. ix. gives us to understand that the present position of affairs proved a serious stumbling-block in the way of faith, and caused men to err in respect to God and the righteousness of His rule in the earth, as they saw how the lot of the righteous was interwoven and confounded with the lot of the wicked. So truly hopeless and forlorn did the condition of the covenanted people appear to those who looked on it with eyes of flesh alone that they were in danger of utterly despairing. Whilst in other and happier days the men of God regarded it as their bounden duty to counteract frivolity, and to draw attention to the earnestness of life, the author of this work strives, on the contrary, with all diligence to impress on his readers the lesson, "Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart" (ix. 7)—a plain proof that his generation was in great danger of yielding to a gloomy and discontented spirit, and that their life was threatened with the loss of all that made it desirable and joyful. The desperate nature of their circumstances is clear also from the earnestness with which the writer warns them against listless inactivity (ix. 10; xi. 4-6). Sluggish hands are to be found wherever men's circumstances seem hopelessly bad; see Isa. xiii. 7; xxxv. 3; Ezek. vii. 17; Job. iv. 3.

Characteristic of the posture of affairs are the words of chap. x. 6, 7: "Folly (which is everywhere set forth in the book as the soul of Heathendom) has been set on great heights, and the rich (*i.e.*, those who, according to God's word and promise, should be rich) sit in a low place. I saw servants (*i.e.*, those who by right, and by God's law, ought to be servants) on horses, and princes (*i.e.*, members of the nation whose vocation it is to rule over the world, Exod. xix. 6), walking on foot like servants." The condition of the power which then ruled the world is depicted in chap. x. 11-20. It pre-

sented a spectacle at once of wickedness and folly (iv. 11-15); the king and his nobles had surrendered themselves to rioting and drunkenness (iv. 16, 17); nowhere had morality any hold; rottenness, wantonness, and gold prevailed everywhere, consequently ruin was inevitable.

Now, the picture thus drawn corresponds to no period but that when the Persians held dominion over the people of God. During the time embraced by the canonical books of the Old Testament, this was the only power to whose tyranny the people of God was subjected in its own land, the temple at the same time standing, and the worship thereof being kept up (compare chap. v. 17).

The time of the Persian rule corresponds to the descriptions given in this book, not only as respects the external, but also as respects the internal condition of the people. Considerable importance must be attached to the fact, that idolatry, the temptation to which had beset the nation so strongly from the days of Solomon to the Babylonish exile, never appears in the delineation of internal evils. During the residence in Babylon false gods seem to have lost their attractions for Israel. On the other hand, however, we find them assailed by enemies and dangers which, from other sources, we know to have been peculiar to the time which succeeded the exile. Malachi, the last of the prophets, delivered his prophecy during the Persian dominion, and in particular during the reign of Artaxerxes, and his warnings and attacks are directed to the same evils as those set forth in this book. Israel's temptation, then, was to Pharisaism—to a resting contented with a hollow righteousness which sought to supply the lack of living fear of God and spiritual devotion by beggarly outward works, sacrifices (iv. 17), long prayers, and the like. We encounter here, as in Malachi, that moroseness which ever accompanies unspiritual religion and soulless morality, when the expectations on which they were based prove to be a delusion, and when painful experience teaches the lesson that godliness is not an affair of gain. Covetousness also is here, which can only be uprooted in a soul that rises steadily and truly towards God, and which a Pharisaical piety, instead of destroying, stimulates and fosters. By this sin men are especially tempted, in times of distress; then we fall

very easily into a habit of scratching and scraping for gain. Finally, in chap. viii. 11, our attention is drawn to the existence of a power tempting men to utter apostacy from God and law, to transgress into the way of the wicked; and from this also we should judge the period to have been one of heavy misfortune.

If such were the external and internal circumstances of the people of God, the idea cannot for a moment be entertained that the book dates from the time of Solomon, and that he was himself the author. For a long time this opinion prevailed both in the Jewish and Christian Church. The true interpretation of the work thus suffered serious detriment, for its practical significance depends in great measure on our clearly and distinctly understanding the historical circumstances to which it owed its origin, and in adaptation to which it was written. The first step towards the overthrow of this prejudice was taken by the Chaldee Paraphrast. It is true, he holds to the opinion that Solomon was its author, but at the same time supposes that through the spirit of prophecy he was transported to, and described the time when, Jerusalem was destroyed and the nation was carried away into exile.* We may remark also in passing, that those who start with the groundless prejudice that David composed all the Psalms, resort to a similar mode of explanation in regard to several whose contents it is plainly impossible to understand from the events and circumstances of that particular period. To Grotius belongs the merit of having first clearly recognised the invalidity of the opinion that Solomon wrote this book.† He failed, however, to enter into a closer discussion of the main argument for his view, namely, the hints given by the book itself regarding the historical circumstances in the midst of which it was composed. The only ground urged by him was the character of the style and language, which indicated a later period. But he erroneously maintained that

* He gives the following pharaphrase of chap. i. 2: Cum videret Salomo rex Israel per spiritum propheticum, regnum Roboam filii sui divisum iri cum Jeroboam, filio Nebat, Jerusalem etiam domumque sanctuarii destructum iri, et populum filiorum Israel exulaturum, dixit in verbo suo, "vanitas," &c.

† Ego tamen Salomonis non esse putò, sed scriptum serius, sub illius regis tanquam pœnitentia ducti nomine. Argumenta ejus rei habeo multa vocabula quæ non alibi quam in Daniele, Esdra et Chaldæis interpretibus reperiu[illegible]

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it was written under the name of Solomon as the Penitent. In this respect he followed too closely in the footsteps of the older commentators of the Church, who looked upon Ecclesiastes as the fruit of Solomon's repentance. Grotius found an adherent of his view in the marvellous Hermann, v.d. Hardt (*de libro Coheleth*, 1716), who, however, was quite incompetent to bring convincing evidence of the correctness of his opinion. Both these men were justly a scandal to the theology of the Church, and, in respect of this question as well as of others it has maintained an attitude of coolness towards them. The Church should take shame to itself for having left Rationalism to make good the truth as to the composition of this book, especially as its very commencement is decidedly against the prevalent prejudice; to its honour, however, be it said that on its revival it gave willing ear to the truth, and since then only a few isolated and unimportant attempts have been made to return to the lower position. In the present work, by more carefully examining the historical relations of the book, we have endeavoured to lay a firmer foundation for the more correct view, and hope thus to render impossible a revival of the old prejudice.

The only argument which is urged with any force in favour of the authorship by Solomon, is the one drawn from the fact that he is named as the author in the title, and is introduced as speaking in the work. The nullity of this argument we shall endeavour to show at chap. i. 1. We shall prove that Solomon is not only not the direct author of the book, but that it does not even profess to be by him, that, on the contrary, the very first words indicate him not to have written it.

Evidence against the authorship of Solomon has been improperly drawn from chap. i. 12-16, ii. 7, where it is said that the fictitious character of the work is for the moment thrown aside; see the remarks on the passage. On the other hand, it is inconsistent with the composition of the book by Solomon that he is represented in chap. ii. 3, 9, as prosecuting his search after sensual enjoyments, possessions, and renown, in the manner of a philosophical experimenter. Solomon is evidently here introduced, not in his actual historical character, but as an ideal person, as the ideal of wisdom.

The tacit allusion in chap. ii. 12, 18, 19, to Solomon's evil successor, would lead also to the conclusion we are advocating. Besides, the author, in designating himself "a wise man" (chap. xii. 9), gives up any pretence of being personally identical with Solomon.

Hand in hand with the evidence against Solomon drawn from the historical circumstances of the work, goes that which is derived from peculiarities of style and language. These are undeniably not those of the time of Solomon, but of the later post-exile period, as we shall show in specific instances in our commentary. Compare, for example, our observations on רעות and רעיון, chap. i. 14; חוץ מן, in the sense of "besides" chap. ii. 25; on מדינה, chap. v. 7; on על דברת, in the sense of "in order that," chap. vii. 14; on פשר, chap. viii. 1; on שלטון, chap. vii. 4; on בכן, chap. viii. 10; on פתגם, chap. viii. 11; on גומץ, chap. x. 8; on מדע, chap. x. 20; and on בטל, chap. xii. 3.

Finally, the position the book occupies in the Canon is a proof that Solomon was not its author—it stands, namely, separated from the writings of that period, and is placed after the "Book of the Lamentations" of Jeremiah, with which last of all the poetical books it is directly associated. It comes also immediately before those writings whose history and prophecy find their explanation in the circumstances of the time succeeding the exile. Had the collectors of the canonical books regarded this as the work of Solomon they would certainly not have given it a place between "Lamentations" and "Esther." For remarks on the arrangement of the third part of the Canon and the Hagiographa, see the "Christology of the Old Testament," pt. iii.

If we may consider it proved that the book originated within the period of the Persian dominion, our next duty is to examine whether we can determine more exactly the precise date of its composition. In doing this we must be principally guided by the fact that the nation which held the supremacy is represented as deeply deteriorated, as having fallen a prey to folly (chap. x. 1), as demoralised by the exercise of despotic power (chap. vii. 7), as sunk in sloth, luxury, debauchery, and mammonism, and as everywhere exhibiting symptoms of the speedy downfall of the entire edifice of the

state (chap. x. 18-19, vii. 1-6). These representations do not permit us to think of the time of Cyrus, but at the same time do not necessitate us to look beyond Xerxes, during whose reign internal corruption and external decay had made the mightiest advances. In these historical circumstances we find then a significant *point d'appui* for the conviction running through the entire book, that a terrible catastrophe was shortly to befal the Persian empire. From looking beyond the period of Xerxes and Artaxerxes we are prevented by the consideration that then the collection of the canonical scriptures was finally completed ; and no book or part of a book can be shown to have had a later origin. Another circumstance also leads us to fix on this time, namely, that this book has strong points of affinity with other productions which then appeared, especially with the prophecies of Malachi, who flourished during the reign of Artaxerxes. The peculiar resemblance between Ecclesiastes v. 5, and Malachi ii. 7, is in itself startling. But of much more decided importance is their agreement in reference to the inner condition of the people. Both writers draw attention to the superficial and external spirit, the self-righteousness, and to the germs of Pharisaism which were then in operation, so that in this respect no two others stand so nearly related to each other as these. With the remarks we have made in reference to Ecclesiastes compare our observations on Malachi in the "Christology," part iii., which are to the following effect: "Immediately after the reproaches uttered by the Prophet follows regularly an inquiry on the part of those who are upbraided as to how they have merited such treatment: and then comes the Prophet's further and fuller exposition. To regard punishment in this light is essentially the tendency of that Pelagian blindness which knows neither God nor itself. No better delineation of the constancy with which this tendency remains true to itself could be given than that which is afforded by the repetition of the same question through the whole book. Pharisaism, in its main features, was already in existence when Malachi spoke. Consider only the predominance of the priestly order, the total want of deeper knowledge of the nature of sin and righteousness, the boasting of external obedience to law, the thirst after judg-

ments on the heathen, who are alone regarded as the object of divine retribution, and, lastly, the murmurs against God, and the truth of our remarks will be apparent." The words, "Be not righteous overmuch" (chap. vii. 16), find their proper comment in Malachi iii. 7, where the people are represented as replying to the summons, "Return to the Lord," and saying, "Wherein shall we return?" on which Abarbanel remarks—*impudenter dicitis acsi nesciatis peccatum aut iniquitatem.* In Malachi the people consider themselves clear as to their own performances, it is only God who is behind-hand in His. To the reproach (chap. v. 3-5) regarding the bad fulfilment of vows—a thing perfectly natural in such a condition, seeing that a dead orthodoxy can never overcome a living selfishness—corresponds what Malachi says chap i. 8. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" i. 14, also, "Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and when he hath a vow sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Moroseness and discontent with the arrangements of God's providence we encounter in Malachi ii. 17, "You weary the Lord with your words: yet ye say, wherein do we weary Him? In that you say,—every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment?" How strong a hold avarice had taken of their souls is clear from Malachi iii. 8, where they are accused of having cheated God in the matter of tithes and offerings. Finally, with the unfavourable picture of the internal condition of the nation drawn from the book of Ecclesiastes accords perfectly the superscription to the prophecies of Malachi—"This is the burden which the Lord utters against Israel by Malachi:" a superscription which would not be at all appropriate to those of Haggai and Zechariah, the immediate predecessors of Malachi. In equal accordance also is the circumstance that Malachi so emphatically announces the approaching judgment.

Ewald has advanced a twofold argument *against* assigning the composition of this book to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and in *favour* of, "the last century of the Persian dominion." The first is, that the writer complains, "in an entirely new and unheard of manner, of an excess of book-

making and reading." It cannot, however, be shown, that a difference in this respect existed between the last century and the last but one of the Persian rule: and to a time subsequent to this, it is by no means allowable to look. For further remarks, we refer to our comments on chap. xii. 12. The second reason urged, is that "such harrowing pain, and desperate cries of agony did not characterise the earlier period of the Persian rule." It must have become, Ewald thinks, in its last years, more oppressive and violent. On this matter, however, history furnishes no authentic information. Nor must we allow ourselves to be led away by the special mention made, in the canonical records of the time, of occasional brighter spots in the history of the nation whilst subject to the Persian yoke;—such as, for example, the permission given by Cyrus to rebuild the Temple, and that accorded by Artaxerxes for the building of the wall of the city. It was rather in accordance with the peculiar purpose of these books, to lay stress on such things, in proof that the Jews were still the chosen people, and that God's grace continued to watch over them. If we keep in mind that what is said in chap. x. 20, indicating that writers were obliged to maintain a certain degree of reserve, holds true also of other works composed during the time of the Persian dominion; and if we carefully gather up scattered hints, it will appear that the people were from the commencement in an extremely oppressed position, that they led a cramped existence, that deep sadness filled all hearts, and that to sink themselves in God was the only remedy against despair.

The characteristic tone of those "Pilgrim Songs," which belong to the time immediately subsequent to the deliverance from exile, to the years when the building of the Temple was interrupted, is one of deep sadness, which has found consolation in God. In Psalm cxxiii. 3, 4, we read, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud." The proud and such as live in security, are no other than their Persian tyrants. Again, in Psalm xxv. 3, we read, "For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto

iniquity." The sceptre of wickedness is the Persian dominion, which was so pertinacious and cruel in its outrages and provocations, that the chosen people were sorely tempted to fall into utter perplexity about God's dealings, to apostatise from Him their Lord, and to become partakers in the wickedness of the wicked. The very same temptation presents itself to our notice in chap. viii. 11 of this book. In Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6, it is said, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. They who go forth weeping bearing the seed-train come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them." Those who sow in tears are themselves. The present has only tears: joy belongs to the future, to the region of hope. Finally, Psalm cxxx. begins with the words, "Out of the depths do I cry unto thee, O Lord." Not without cause has the Church set this apart as a funereal Psalm. It is the cry for help sent up by Israel when encompassed with the bands of death.

The words of chap. vii. 7, "a gift destroyeth the heart," and of chap. x. 19, "Money answereth all things," find their explanation and justification in chap. iv. 5 of the book of Ezra, where the Persian officials are clearly charged with being open to bribes;—"and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus King of Persia, even until the reign of Darius,"on which Michaelis remarks, "*mercede conducebant, qui pecunia a Cuthæis accepta auctoritate sua effecerunt ne Judæis nunc pergere liceret.*" And in chap. ix. 7, of the same book, the state of the Jews under their heathenish oppressors, which still continued, is described as one of extreme wretchedness:—"they were delivered over to spoil and confusion of face;" through the mission of Ezra they received a little life in their bondage. "We are bondsmen," it is said in ver. 9, "but our God has not forsaken us in our bondage."

According to Nehemiah i. 3, news is brought to Nehemiah from Jerusalem, "that the remnant in the country are in great affliction and reproach." What utter poverty was the result of the oppressive tribute, from which, according to Ezra vii. 24, only the Priests and Levites were exempt, is plain from Nehemiah v. 4, where such as had been reduced to personal bondage by the usurers, address Nehemiah in the words, "We have borrowed money for the king's taxes on our

lands and vineyards;"—their produce consequently was not sufficient to pay the high imposts. In chap. v. 15, Nehemiah relates that "the former governors who had been before him" —who were without doubt Gentiles, for, as it appears, Serubabel and Nehemiah were the only Jews who had held that office—"had been burdensome to the people, and had taken from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver, (daily;) their servants also had used violence towards the people: but so did not I because of the fear of God." שלטו על העם compare Ecclesiastes viii. 9, "a day when one man exercises power over another to his hurt." In chap. v. 18, Nehemiah says, "The bread of the governor have I not required, because the service was heavy upon this people:" it was already heavily enough burdened with the taxes which it had to pay to its tyrant rulers. At the solemnization of the Feast of Tabernacles under Nehemiah, we read (chap. viii. 9,) that Ezra said to the people, "this day is holy to the Lord your God: therefore mourn not, nor weep." For all the people, it is observed, wept "when they heard the words of the law,"—words which had found such a sad fulfilment in their present misery. The description given in Nehemiah ix. 36-37, is of itself a sufficient proof that the circumstances alluded to in Ecclesiastes are in no respect more sad and gloomy than those of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. There the existence of the people appears to be entirely precarious: they have only so much as is left them after the utterly lawless, unjust and arbitrary exactions of their oppressors. Not only does the produce of their lands stand at their disposal, but the cattle, and even the men themselves must do service whenever their heathen tyrants please to claim it: "and over our bodies do they rule, and over our cattle, as they please, and we are in great distress." In consequence of their wretched condition, religious indifference had gained ground amongst the people; the spirit of sacrifice had died out; and the portion of the Levites was not given to them, so that they fled, every man to his own lands, and the house of God was forsaken, (Neh. xiii. 10-11;) the Sabbath was in many ways desecrated (xiii. 15-22,) and an usurious disposition gained the upper-hand amongst the people, in that every man believed himself forced to care for himself, (chap. v.)

The Book of Esther presents a picture of the Persian Empire in a state of deep moral degradation, the direct result of which was "oppression," (Eccles. vii. 7,) and violence. Everything was dependent on the humours of the king and his great officers. All moral considerations were disregarded; and there was recognised no higher standard than the pleasure of the king. The Book of Esther furnishes vouchers for the complaints in Ecclesiastes of the drunkenness of the tyrants, of the unbounded influence of money: Haman urged as a reason for the destruction of the Jews, that it would bring ten thousand talents of silver into the treasury.

The arguments brought forward by Ewald to prove that this book was written towards the close of the Persian rule, are thus shown to be untenable, unsound. On the other hand, even Ewald himself is compelled to acknowledge that "of all biblical books Malachi's prophecies bear the closest resemblance to Ecclesiastes."

What are we to say now regarding the plan of the book, which under such circumstances was meant to exercise an influence on the people of God? Herder has given the right answer to this question. "Theologians," says he, "have taken great pains to ascertain the plan of the book; but the best course is to make as free a use of it as one can, and for such a purpose the individual parts will serve." A connected and orderly argument, an elaborate arrangement of parts, is as little to be looked for here as in the special portion of the Book of Proverbs which begins with chapter x., or as in the alphabetical Psalms. Such matters of plan and connection have been thrust into the book by interpreters who were incapable of passing out of their own circle of ideas, as by degrees became evident from the fact that no one of these arrangements gained anything like general recognition, but that on the contrary each remained the sole property of its originator and of his slavish followers. Carpzov betrays a narrow estimate of Inspiration when, in his "Introduction," he speaks of it as necessarily implying and producing the "*ordo concinnus*." The same limitation of view is chargeable also upon certain more recent writers, who think that a definite plan must be found in the book in order to save the credit of the author. It is a part of the peculiarity of

the book to have no such plan: and this characteristic greatly conduces to the breadth of its views and the variety of its modes of representation. The thread which connects all the parts together is simply the pervading reference to the circumstances and moods, the necessities and grievances of the time. This it is that gives it unity: and its author sets a good example to all those who are called to address the men of our own generation in that he never soars away into the clouds, nor wastes his time in general reflections and common-places, but keeps constantly in view the very Jews who were then groaning under Persian tyranny, to whose sick souls it was his first duty to administer the wholesome medicine with which God had entrusted him: by ever fresh strokes and features he depicts their condition to them, little by little he communicates the wisdom that is from above, and in the varying turns of his discourse sets before them constantly the most important and essentially saving truths. It is quite misleading to represent the work as occupied with a single narrow theme, as for example Knobel does when he says that "the affirmation of the vanity of human life and human endeavours forms the subject of the book." Such also is Keil's mistake, who says (see Havernick's "Introduction,") "The aim of the book is to teach how to enjoy life truly, that is, how to realise in life that solid pleasure of which contentment and piety are constituent elements." A superficial glance at its contents will amply show that they are of far too rich and varied a nature to be comprehended under one such single theme. And if we are determined that the book shall have one leading topic, we must give it as wide and general a scope as the author himself does in the words of chap. xii. 13, "Fear God." To further the fear of God and life in Him is the great purpose of the writer in all that he advances: hence his assertion of the vanity of all earthly things, for he alone can fully appreciate what a precious treasure man has in God, who has learnt by living experience the truth, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Let us now pass to a more careful examination of the contents of the book. Written in the midst of circumstances such as have been just described, its tone is partly one of consolation, and partly one of admonition and reproof, so that

in it may be discerned "the rebuke of the wise," (chap. vii. 5.) Nor is it by accident that the author girds himself first of all to the discharge of his office as a comforter, using therein all diligence. His prime object was to turn the hearts of the people again to God, for notwithstanding its great weaknesses it was still God's heritage, and in its midst God had His dwelling-place. Only when this end had been attained could a hearing be gained for admonitions and reproofs. The people had fallen into error regarding God and His ways, and this was the real root of their moral corruption,—on this account were the hearts of the children of men fully set to do evil, (chap. viii. 11.)

The manner in which the author opens his mission of consolation may at first sight strike us as somewhat singular: from all sides there rose the complaint, "vanity of vanities,"—how evil are our times compared with earlier ones, especially as compared with the glorious days of Solomon? Then the writer breaks in with the proclamation, that the life of man is altogether vanity, that this world is a vale of tears, that the difference between happy and troublous times is much less decided than it appears on a superficial examination, (chap. i. 2-11.) The cross is much easier to bear when it is seen to be the universal destiny of man. From chap. i. 12, to the end of chap. ii., Solomon, whom the writer introduces as the speaker, shows from his own example and experience, the emptiness of everything earthly. He begins with wisdom. This was one of the splendid possessions of the age of Solomon, upon which the after-world looked back in astonished admiration and with painful yearnings: and all the more earnestly, because this had been imposing, even in the eyes of that Gentile world, beneath whose contempt and scorn they now sighed. From wisdom, Solomon then turns to the possession and enjoyment of the good things of this world. Everywhere the author discovers the hollowness which lies concealed beneath glitter and show, the pain which is covered by the mask of pleasure. In this way, he tears up envy and discontent by the roots, and exhorts his fellow countrymen to seek elsewhere their happiness, to draw it from those inexhaustible eternal fountains, which even at that time were open to all who chose to come.

In other places also the author offers to his unhappy contemporaries the consolation which is derivable from a just estimate of earthly possessions. He exhibits most earnestness and keenness in unmasking the hollowness of those riches for the sake of which the Gentile world was an object of envy. "Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," is the theme of which he treats in chap. vi. 4;—"Riches expose to envy and involve in uneasiness" is the text of chap. iv. 7-12, chap. v. 9-19, and of the whole of chap. vi. Here are to be found the properly classical passages of Holy Scripture, on which may be based a true estimate of riches. Nowhere else is the vanity of riches exposed with such depth of penetration, with such fulness of detail, with such caustic pungency. After laying bare the vanity of riches, he proceeds to show the prevalence of folly and falsity in the government of kingdoms, (chap. iv. 13-16.)

Hand in hand with the exposure of the vanity of what was mourned as lost, attention is directed to sources of joy still remaining open to the people of God, even in its poverty-stricken state, and out of which it is bound thankfully to draw. Life itself is a noble possession, (chap. xi. 7, 8;) and the godly heart may still always find in it a multitude of lesser joys, of which it is its duty, living only for the present moment, to avail itself in freedom from care and covetousness, (chap. ii. 24; iii. 12, 22; viii. 15; xi. 9, 10.) Despite all their losses in wealth and power, they may continue to "eat, drink and be glad."

But that consolation which springs from setting a true value on earthly happiness and earthly endowments is not sufficient by itself. For on the one hand, however little importance is to be attached to earthly good in itself, God gave a pledge to His people in the earliest days of its existence, that He would never forsake nor neglect it, even as regards external matters, and it must therefore give rise to doubts of God's omnipotence and love if no evidence can be adduced of the fulfilment of His promises. And, on the other hand, it was not a question here merely of lower blessings and possessions. The real sting of the grief was the prostrate position of the people of God, the crying contradiction existing between its inward idea and its outward manifestation, between the word

of God and the realities around them. Koheleth must therefore open up new fountains of comfort if his mission of consolation is to be satisfactorily fulfilled.

In chap. iii. 1-15, he comforts the poor and wretched who seek water and find it not, by directing their thoughts to the all-superintending providence of God, "who maketh everything beautiful in its time," who even in days of suffering has thoughts of peace, from whom it behoves to accept everything without reluctance because whatever He does is done well, whose beneficent hand is upon us even when we fail to see it, and who will at last bring all things to a glorious termination. The writer exhorts men also in chap. vii. 13, 14, to commit themselves to the fatherly care of God who proceeds ever on the wisest method.

So repeatedly and emphatically does the author refer to an exaltation of Israel impending in the immediate future, to the revelation of the retributive righteousness of God, to the change of relative positions which their king was about to introduce on a large scale, that we may regard it as one of the prominent ideas of the book. In chap. iii. 16, 17, he expatiates on the thought that so certainly as there is a righteous God in Heaven, who watches over the maintenance of His laws and order upon earth, so certainly must the disorder which characterised the tyrannies of heathendom come to an end, and Israel, which, notwithstanding the false seed that had been mixed up with it, was still God's people, the congregation of the "righteous" and "upright," lift up its head amongst the nations. In chap. v. 7, 8, he teaches that the heavenly King and Judge will bring all things again into order at the proper time. According to chap. vii. 5-10, the prosperity of the world is the precursor of impending destruction: the people of God on the contrary will receive its best portion at the end, if it only exercise patience and wait on the leadings of divine providence. According to chap. viii. 5-8, and 9-13, God will one day deliver His own, punish their oppressors, and no power in the world will be able to interrupt the course of His judgments. According to chap. ix. 7-10, God takes pleasure in the works of His own people, and therefore at the proper time the now failing recompence will be effected. In chap. ix. 11, 12, we are reminded that sudden catastrophes very frequently

cast down to the ground that which had exalted itself. In chap. x. 5-10, it is foretold that at some future day God will take away the reproach which is offered by the humiliation of His own people, and by the triumph of the world. Several passages hint still more definitely at the imminent downfall of the Persian Empire: as for example, chap. vi. 2, where the stranger who will consume the wealth of the rich man, is the successor of the Persian on the throne of the world; and chap. vi. 3, where the words "and he shall have no burial," set before the Persians the prospect of a mighty and bloody overthrow; and chap. vii. 6, where the prosperity of the Persians is compared to a fire of crackling thorns which blazes violently up, but is quickly extinguished; and ver. 7, where the demoralization of the Persians, a result of their exercise of tyrannical power, is represented as the herald of their speedy destruction. Of the same tendency are chap. x. 1-3, where the writer dwells on the thought, that whenever folly prevails as it did at that time amongst the Persians, ruin cannot be far off: also chap. x. 11-20, where the moral decay of the Persians, which had now reached its extreme point, is conceived to portend a swift extinction; and lastly, chap. xi. 3, which teaches that the storm of divine wrath will soon uproot and cast down the haughty tree of the Persian Empire: "When the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if a tree falls, be it in the south or be it in the north, in the place where it falleth there shall it be."

That a great change would at some future day take place in the position of affairs, the people of God might hope with the greater confidence, because they continued to possess the wisdom which is from above—not the glittering and brilliant wisdom of the age of Solomon, but the secret and hidden wisdom peculiar to the children of God, of which they alone amongst all the nations of the earth were the depositaries. This advantage over others was of itself a pledge of their future victory over the world. The Gentile nations are foolish because they are left to the guidance of their own reason, and are cut off from the source of all wisdom. But in the midst of Israel, on the contrary, the nation of revelation, to which God had made known His nature and will, thus delivering it from the sophistries by whose chains the natural

man has been completely bound ever since the Fall, wisdom has established its abode. At the fitting time, too, power must certainly follow in the footsteps of wisdom. According to chap. vii. 11, 12, wisdom and life go hand in hand. On this ground, Israel may comfort itself even in death. According to chap. vii. 19, 20, wisdom is the only defence against divine judgments, because it alone preserves from sins which inevitably draw judgments in their train. In chap. ix. 13-18, the theme is discussed,—wisdom, the treasure that remains, is nobler than the strength which is lost: "wisdom is better than weapons of war, and one sinner destroys much good."

Still, to point attention merely to a future reconciliation to be brought about between realization and idea, between the destiny assigned to the people of God and its actual visible condition, was not a full discharge of the writer's mission of consolation. His business was further to open to his fellow-countrymen an insight into the causes of the temporal disturbances of the true and normal relations of things, for until it was shown to have an adequate ground and reason, it would be impossible to look forward with any confidence to a final restoration. If God is capable in any sense or degree of being unrighteous and hard towards the people of His choice, towards those whom He had pledged himself to love, the fear that He might continue so to the end would present itself again and again with fresh force.

The first thing to be learnt is to recognise in temporal afflictions the ordainments of that divine *righteousness* which cannot leave even the sin of its own children unpunished;—nay more, which must discover itself especially in its treatment of them, as those who by God's grace "know how to walk before the living," (chap. vi. 8.) This is as certain as that the servant who knows his Lord's will and doeth it not shall be beaten with many stripes; as that God will fulfil what is said in Leviticus x. 3: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me;" as that it is said (Amos iii. 2): "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, *therefore* I visit upon you all your iniquities," and "Judgment must begin at the house of God." The author leads his sorrowing and afflicted people to this at once painful and consolatory point of view in chap. vii. 21, 22. He works also indirectly

towards this end whenever he lays bare their sins before the eyes of the people. Their duty was to be content with God, to see light and justice in His providential arrangements, in the same degree in which they were dissatisfied with themselves. When the writer, in chap. iv. 17—v. 6, reproaches the nation with a superficial piety, which sought to satisfy God by sacrifices instead of honouring Him with obedience to His laws, which endeavoured to substitute high sounding words for the lacking devotion, and which acted frivolously in respect of vows: and when further, in chap. vii. 15-18, he demonstrates that the pretended "righteousness" of Israel, that foundation of its proud claims, when more closely examined proves to be but another form of godlessness, and points to the open apostacy of which they were at the same time guilty, he furnishes the people with the key to their troubles, and throws light upon the arrangements of God, which hitherto through the want of self-knowledge had been enshrouded in darkness. He thus treads in the footsteps of Moses, who drew an exalted picture of such a Theodicy in Deut. xxxii, where his theme was: "God is faithful and without iniquity, just and upright is He. Hath He acted corruptly towards His people? The blot is on His sons, a perverse and corrupt generation."

The second thing to be learnt is to recognise in suffering an ordainment of *divine love*—to see that it is grace concealed under the form of severity, that there dwells in it a reformatory virtue for all those who love God, that it is an indispensable means of progress of which God cannot without cruelty deprive His children. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth." Where is there a father who does not chastise his son? Koheleth directs the attention of his sorrowing people to this sweet kernel which lay hidden within the bitter husk of affliction, in chap. vii. 2-4: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." Suffering gives the peaceable fruit of righteousness to such as are exercised thereby. The same purpose is subserved by chap. iii. 18, "I said in my heart, For the sake of the children

of men such things happen, in order that God may purify them, and in order that they may see that by themselves they are beasts." Suffering is a means of refinement to the people of God, serving especially to strip them of all pride and to lead them to humility. Purification is the general aim of tribulation: but special mention is here made of *pride* as the root and foundation of sin. That such is its character is evident even from the words which the Old Serpent whispered in his temptation of our first parents: "In that day ye shall be as God;" and by which he caused them to fall. The greater the privileges vouchsafed by God to the nation to which He specially revealed himself, the more liable was it to this particular form of sin. From the same point of view, namely, as a means of "hiding pride from man," (Job xxxiii. 17) are afflictions regarded also in chap. vii. 13, 14. God permits evil days to alternate with good, "in order that man may not find anything behind himself;" in order that he may not be able to fathom in any measure that which lies behind his present condition, and still less arrange any part thereof according to his own will; and finally, in order that thus he may be fully conscious of his dependence, may become a little child and thoroughly humble.

In this manner did the writer of Ecclesiastes fulfil his mission as a comforter. Many things may be missed here, specially any definite reference to Christ, the central point of all consolation, and to that future glory with which the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared, but which the Lord will bestow on his own followers. We must bear in mind, however, that the Scriptures are an organic whole consisting of very different members, and that it is therefore preposterous to expect to find the same thing everywhere. To "wisdom," in the narrower sense of that word, but a limited sphere was assigned amongst the Israelites. Its business lay not with what was hidden but with that which was manifest, not with the proper mysteries of the Faith, which, under the Old Covenant, belonged to the domain of prophecy, but with the truths which had already become thoroughly a part of the consciousness of the community. With these the mind of thoughtful Israelites occupied itself; these it sought to make clear, and bring home to the under-

standing and the heart.* The prophecies of Daniel, and of the three post-exile prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, constitute the nearest supplement to Koheleth.

The human side of this book, as to which it belongs to the sphere of sacred philosophy,—for the writer does not profess himself to be an organ of immediate divine revelations,—is brought to view especially in chap. vii. 23-29, where the author himself reflects on the way and manner of his acquaintance with higher truth. Compare particularly verse 25: "I applied myself with my heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom and thoughts," and verse 27: "Lo, this have I found, said Koheleth, one by one, finding thoughts." His method he describes to have been that of taking separately single thoughts, and by meditation drawing out their fulness and significance. This is the reflective and speculative method, not that of direct intuition. That there is a higher degree of wisdom in its more general sense, the degree to which a Moses or an Isaiah arose, who received truth by direct revelation, the writer himself confesses in chap. vii. 28. But he does not for this reason relinquish the claim to be inspired: his inspiration must be conceived specially as preserving, purifying, and heightening the natural powers of his mind. In chap. xii. 11, he expressly co-ordinates his work with the sacred writings, the distinguishing characteristic of which in relation to all other literary productions is, as he himself states, "that they are given by the one shepherd," who ever relieves the wants of his people, who feeds them in green pastures, and leads them by the fresh waters, and in consequence are living and mighty, laying hold of heart and spirit in their inmost depths. With this expression of the author all will agree whom God's Spirit has qualified for forming a judgment in this sphere. What Picus of Mirandola

* Oehler, in his "Prolegomena zur Theologie des Alten Testaments," justly characterises most of the Hagiographa as "the product of the Israelitish mind, partly, when endeavouring, by feeling, to penetrate into the depths of the divine revelation and the experiences to which that revelation gave rise in life, and partly when musing on the same," (page 92) and deduces their origin (pages 88, 89) "from the struggle of Hebrew intellect to enter into the task assigned to, and the view given of, life by Mosaism, the effort to appropriate inwardly, and to attain to a thorough understanding of, the substance of revelation, and by reflection to solve its enigmas and contradictions."

says of the entire sacred Scriptures, holds perfectly true of this book: "Nothing so strongly affects both heart and judgment as the reading of Holy Scripture, and yet they are but simple words without art, which thus overpower us. These words, however, are full of life, soul, and fire,—they penetrate deeply into the spirit, and transform the whole man."* In agreement with the circumstances of the time wisdom walks here in the form of a servant, and in the utterly unadorned garment of poverty; but its words are as goads and nails, and there dwells in them a power to refresh and sanctify the spirit and heart.

The writer's peculiar use of the name of God furnishes a noteworthy indication that he deliberately purposed to confine himself to a circumscribed sphere of thought. Amongst the Hebrew names of God Elohim had the most general signification: and this name occurs in the book no fewer than thirty-nine times, seven times with, and thirty-two times without the article. Nowhere do we meet with another designation; especially, be it remarked, we do not find the name Jehovah, which answered to the fully developed religious consciousness, and the use of which absolutely predominates in the Prophets who preceded and were contemporary with Koheleth. The writer thus emphatically shows that he makes no pretensions to be an organ of direct revelations from God, but that his purpose is to unfold a sacred philosophy.

That the author refrains from employing the designation Jehovah has been ascribed by some to the superstitious fear which the later Jews had of giving utterance to that name. Such dread, however, belonged to the post-canonical period: within the canon itself there is nowhere a trace of it. Within the canon the use of the names of God is everywhere determined by their inherent difference of signification, and it was a matter for the free choice of the several writers which of the two names was employed. It is so in the Pentateuch: it is so in the Psalms.† To the use of these names here, that of the book of Job bears the nearest resemblance: and with it

* v. Raumer, *Geschichte der Pædagogik*, p. i., s. 49.

† Compare my Commentary, part iv.

Koheleth was without doubt well acquainted.* In the Prologue to the book of Job יהוה is generally used;—as also in the Epilogue and in the historical remarks which are interspersed. In the discourses of Job and his friends, on the contrary, the general names of God, Eloah, El, &c., are employed, with the single exception of chap. xii. 9, where we find Jehovah. The problem before the writer is considered from the point of view of Natural Theology with the aid of experience, and of reason as purified by the Spirit of God. If the author's intention was to treat his subject from the point of view afforded by that consciousness of God which is common to men in general, then it was perfectly natural that he should confine his speakers to the corresponding divine name. Once only does he permit Job to break through this rule, and then in order that the avoidance elsewhere of the name Jehovah might be more distinctly seen to be intentional, and might not be traced to any merely external reasons. The Book of Nehemiah, which was nearly contemporaneous with Ecclesiastes, also furnishes an analogy. The facts of the case are presented as follows by Kleinert in the Dorpat *Beiträge zu den Theologischen Wissenschaften*," 1. §. 132. "In the entire Book of Nehemiah," (*i.e.*, in chapters i.-vii. and xi.-xiii.; for chapters viii.-x. were written by Ezra, and only adopted into his work by Nehemiah), "the name Jehovah occurs only once, namely, in chap. i. 5, in conjunction with Elohim: besides, Adonai occurs only twice: and elsewhere Nehemiah always designates God by the term Elohim." In the Book of Ezra, on the contrary, and in chapters viii.-x. of Nehemiah, which, as was observed before, are by Ezra, the name Jehovah predominates. Nehemiah wrote as a layman, as a politician mixed up with the affairs of the world. His humility did not permit him frequently to take God's holiest name upon his lips. In all these cases, and in Ecclesiastes as well, there was no absolute necessity for abstaining from the use of the name Jehovah; other reasons might have decided for its employment; but the authors

* Hitzig remarks in his Commentary, "The Book of Job, which, as to its general views and tendency, is so nearly related to Ecclesiastes, must undoubtedly have been read by Koheleth," v. 14, vii. 28. (The other passages adduced by Hitzig, viz., vi. 3, vii. 14, 16, are less certain).

were guided by such considerations as seemed to them to favour their abstinence.

It being the purpose of the writer to expound a sacred philosophy, and not to touch upon the sphere of the mysteries of the faith, we might thence explain why nothing was said about immortality and eternal life, if this were actually the case, as Rationalistic interpreters with one voice affirm. In the course of our Commentary we shall plainly show that such is not the case. According to chap. iii. 11, God has put eternity into the heart of man: according to chap. iii. 21, the spirit of man rises upwards at death, whilst the souls of beasts perish with their bodies; according to chap. xii. 7, the spirit of man returns at death to God who gave it, in order that it may receive that which its deeds have deserved (chap. xii. 14). It is, however, so far correct that the author maintains a gentle reserve in respect of this doctrine, limiting himself to slight though distinct and unambiguous hints, in order thus not to pass the boundary line which separates "wisdom" from prophecy. The comparison of Isaiah xxv. 7, 8, xxvi. 19, and of Daniel xii. 2, 3, will throw light on this distinction.

Thus far we have occupied ourselves only with the consolatory part of the mission of Koheleth: let us now turn our attention to its admonitory and punitive aspect.

Several of the admonitions of the Preacher are so general in their character, that they are equally well adapted to all times. In chap. xii. 13, he exhorts to the fear of God and the keeping of his commandments. This he describes as a duty universally binding upon men, and as the only preservative from the judgments of God who cannot permit that man, whom He made in His own image, should emancipate himself from Him. That, says he, is the conclusion and sum of the whole matter; this is the Alpha and Omega of an upright life, the starting-point and basis of all the special teachings and exhortations of the book. "Fear God"—in these two words he sums up, in chap. v. 7 also, all that he has to say to his readers. Hand in hand with this goes another brief saying which applies to the faithful of all times, namely, "Do good," (chap. iii. 12, with which compare chap. vii. 20). "Remember thy Creator:" such is the writer's ex-

hortation in chap. xii. 1, and the strongest motive he can urge for the following of his advice is, that those who refuse to listen to it, being separated from God, the source of all health, will have to mourn in this world a misspent existence, and after death will fall under Divine judgment. The author makes repeated and emphatic reference to the judgment of God both in this life and in that which is to come, which visits inevitably every deed however secret; and he shows himself to be most livingly penetrated by the thought that God will recompense to every man according to his works (compare chap. vii. 16, 17, xi. 10, xii. 7, 14).

Along with general exhortations like these we find such as have a special bearing on the circumstances and tendencies of the time. The writer lays bare the evils of the time, and seeks to effect their removal, not after the manner of the Prophets by raising his voice in trumpet tones against them, but by calmly reasoning and exposing their preposterous character.

At all periods in which the powers of this world have weighed oppressively on the people of God, the temptation has been peculiarly strong to approve and adopt the worldly wisdom which prevailed amongst the surrounding heathen nations. The danger lay very near of coming, in that manner, to terms with the world, and seeking thus to be on equal footing with it. Against this false heathenish wisdom, which seeks out many inventions, (chap. vii. 29,) and which should be regarded as the great foe of their welfare and safety, the writer utters his warning in chap. vii. 25, 26; he further admonishes the Israelites to offer energetic resistance to its attacks upon themselves. In chap. xii. 12, he warns them against familiarising themselves with worldly literature. In opposition to the false foreign wisdom he sets before them the genuine, viz., their own native wisdom, which "knows the meaning of things," which leads men to a knowledge of their true nature, and thus affords the basis for a right practical conduct in relation to them. With the manifold divisions of heathendom which though ever learning never comes to a knowledge of the truth, he contrasts their own book of books, (chap. xii. 11,) which, whilst seeming to have many authors had in reality but one, even the Shepherd of Israel, and the words thereof

are consequently as goads and nails, penetrating heart and spirit and laying hold of their inmost depths.

Hand in hand with the temptation to adopt the wisdom of the heathens went that of falling into their sinful way of life. Those who saw misery weighing heavily on the people of God, and on the contrary all things going well and happily with the heathen in their life of sin: those who saw how these latter "tempted God and escaped," and how the "doers of crime were established," (Mal. iii. 15,) must have felt a strong temptation to doubt and despair of God, and to let the evil desires of the heart have full and free play. Against this danger the author warns men in chap. viii. 1-4, 11; vii. 17.

Still even these temptations were by no means the most dangerous. The most critical and suspicious elements of the present condition of the Jews, were those which prepared the way for the later Pharisaism.

The prime evil of the time, was that righteousness which owed its origin to speculations on the advantages it would bring, which was full of claims, full of merits, and full of murmurs against God, who refused to honour the drafts drawn on Him. In chap. vii. 15-18, he enters the lists against this destructive tendency, which at a later period grew so much more hardened and decided that the Lord was driven to utter, against those who in His day were its representatives, the terrible words: "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" This counterfeit righteousness which then gave itself such pretentious airs, he describes as but another form of ungodliness, running parallel with open apostacy; and he shows, that so far from ensuring salvation, it involves us in the divine condemnation: for God cannot allow himself to be put off with such a hollow and heartless piety, but demands, and must have genuine fear and faith.

In chap. viii. 14, 15, the book speaks out against the hireling spirit which was bound up with such an evil righteousness. Godliness ought not to be a question of gain, nor righteousness to originate in speculations of future good. Therefore are the ways of the recompensing God quite darkened: and things go very differently from men's fancies. If they went according to men's thoughts, that is, in other words, if for

every work really or apparently good, and for every evil deed, the reward were forthwith weighed and measured out piece by piece, there would soon be no genuine uprightness left on earth, for true righteousness is the daughter of hearty and unselfish love. The happiness of life must not then be regarded as a hireling regards his wages; it must not have this basis. Our duty is rather cheerfully to enjoy in the present what God graciously bestows, to use the present moment and not to speculate on the future.

Moroseness also is inseparably conjoined with false righteousness, as was clearly shown in the example of Cain at the very commencement of the human race. The punishment inflicted on sin, where there is defective knowledge of the sin itself, produces dark despondency, and discontent with God's arrangements, (Isaiah lviii. 3; Malachi iii. 14.)

With this spirit of gloom, dejection and ill humour the self-righteous had more or less infected the whole people. This too was the one amongst the chief evils of the age, which even the really righteous were least able to resist. To the healing of this disorder the author has directed his special attention. See chap. ii. 24; iii. 12, 22; viii. 15: "Then I commended mirth because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink and be merry:" compare also chap. ix. 7; xi. 8-10. Koheleth is from his heart an enemy to extravagant mirth and sensual feasting. He says to laughter, "thou art mad, and to mirth, what doest thou?" (chap. ii. 2.) "The heart of fools is in the house of mirth," (chap. vii. 4.) Indeed the entire book, and in particular chap. vii. 1-5, breathes the intensest earnestness. In chap. xii. 1, he points out how *devotion* is the foundation of all happiness, of all joy, and in chap xi. 9, warns the extravagant and dissolute that God will bring all their doings and ways into judgment. At the same time, he recommends that cheerful confidence in God which does not allow itself to be led astray by the aspect of affairs at the present moment, but waits joyfully in hope of a better future: and enjoins an unbroken courage which can proceed steadily forward in the path of duty, and can calmly wait until the actual arrangements of this world are once more brought into agreement with the word and nature of God. He warns against thanklessly despising that which God gra-

ciously offers. The Saviour set His seal of confirmation to the utterances of this book, when, with a reference to it, he said, "the Son of man is come eating and drinking." And the offence which the Pharisees took at His manner of life, proves that in them was still perpetuated the tendency against which the author of this book directs his observations.

In conjunction with this morose and melancholy spirit were found a slothful feebleness and timidity. Men had no courage or pleasure in doing anything, because they regarded it all as useless. Against such conduct the author raises his voice in chap. ix. 10, and again in chap. xi. 4-6. Precisely in dark and troublous times ought we to be the more earnest in fulfilling the vocation wherewith God has called us: we should sow incessantly in tears that we may reap in joy.

The religious superficiality of the age, the want of a living fear of God, manifested itself not only in self-righteousness, and in the gloomy discontent and hopeless inactivity which it produced, but also in a disposition to put off God with soulless sacrifices instead of honouring Him by obedience, in the efforts made to cover the absence of a heart which constantly seeks and supplicates God by the show and pretence of offering long prayers, and finally, in the extreme readiness to vow vows in the fulfilment of which they showed little conscientiousness, and the obligations of which they thought themselves able to discharge by a mere formality. Against such things the writer speaks in chap. iv. 17; v. 6.

It is not a superficial piety that can give in arduous circumstances the precious pearl of peace of soul, and preserve from that irritability, whose inevitable result is a heightening of our suffering. Only a deep and hearty godliness, which sees in all, even in the most afflictive events a Father's hand, and submits itself with quiet resignation, can do this. Against that dangerous enemy *irritability* the author warns his fellow-countrymen in chap. x. 4. Side by side with this we may place his recommendation of *patience*, (chap. vii. 8.)

The Pharisees, as the New Testament says, were covetous. Covetousness flourishes most luxuriantly where a religiousness which is merely external, and changes not the heart, presents it with a covering of fig leaves. When men conclude a peace with God by means of services which do not flow from the

heart, their darling inclinations come all the more freely into play. In battling with this enemy of the divine life, the book displays peculiar zeal—a plain proof that it was then specially dangerous. They are the same passages as those in which the author opposes the prevalent envy of the riches of the heathen; and envy has the same root as avarice, (chap. iv. 7-12; v. 9-19; vi.)

The preacher rightly discerned the signs of the times. He saw that a great catastrophe drew nigh, that a time approached when the "the peoples will rage and the kingdoms be moved" (Psalm xlvi. 7). Whilst teaching how men should make preparations for this, so that they may feel that they have a gracious God through it all, he sets in opposition to the bosom sin of the age, namely, covetous narrow-heartedness, that generous-minded liberality which is closely allied with a true love of God and is a proof that we are his children (chap. xi. 1-3).

In this manner has the writer discharged the mission of reproof and admonition, with which, as well as with that of consolation, he was intrusted.

Various judgments have been passed upon this book. As the representative of the theology of the Church let us hear what Luther says about it. He styles it—"This noble little book, which for good reasons it were exceedingly worth while that it should be read of all men with great carefulness every day." "The main point (or more correctly, *a* main point) in this book," says he, "is, that there is no higher wisdom on earth under the sun than that every man should fill his post industriously and in the fear of God, not troubling himself whether or no his work turn out as he would fain have it, but contenting himself, and leaving the ordering of all things great and small entirely to God. In fine, that he be contented, and abide by that which God gives him at the present moment, taking for motto the words, 'The Lord's behest will turn out best.' And thus a man should not worry and question and trouble himself how things will or should turn out in the future, but think within himself—God has entrusted me with this office, with this work, and I am resolved to discharge it diligently: if my counsels and plans do not succeed as I expected, let God dispose, ordain,

and rule as He will." Even on profounder minds, who held a freer position in relation to Holy Scripture, this book has exercised an attracting influence. Herder, for example, says —"No ancient book that I am acquainted with describes more fully, impressively, and concisely the sum of human life, the uncertainty and vanity of its business plans, speculations and pleasures, along with that in it which is alone true, lasting, progressive, and compensatory." On the contrary, the soulless, spiritless, vulgar Rationalism has been capable of little sympathy with the book. A. Th. Hartman gave most open expression to his antipathy to it.* He describes it as "the work of a morose Hebrew Philosopher, composed when he was in a dismal mood, and in places thoroughly tedious."

Even at an early period objections were raised against this book amongst the Jews. In the Talmud, in Tractate Schabbath, f. 30, b., it is said that the wise men wished to suppress the book of Koheleth, because it contains contradictions. "But why have they not suppressed it? Because its beginning and its end are words of the law." According to the Midrasch, the wise men wished to suppress Koheleth, because all its wisdom ended in the injunction of chap. xi. 9 : "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes," which passage contradicts Numbers xv. 39. Inasmuch, however, as Solomon has added, "But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment," therefore, they said, "Solomon has spoken well," שלמה יפה אמר. Jerome has reported similar words as uttered by Jews ; for which see the quotation given at chap. xii. 14.

Some have supposed that by the "wise men" are meant the collectors of the Canon—but wrongly. Had these been meant they would have been more distinctly designated. We have before us reflections on the book as one which had already had its place assigned to it in the Canon. A distinction should further be drawn between the thoughts and their dress, between the mode of saying and the thing said. The thought is, that examining the book only super-

* Linguistical Introduction to the Book of Koheleth in "Winer's Zeitschrift," 1 s., 29 f.

ficially it awakens hesitations, but these vanish after deeper consideration. The opinion is not, that we should be content to put up with the offensive passages for the sake of such as are of an edifying nature, but that the latter should be our guide in investigating and understanding the former.

The assertion which Augusti, Schmidt, and, in part also, Knobel have ventured to make, that the author of the "Book of Wisdom" attacks Koheleth in chap. ii., has so little foundation that it is not worth the trouble of examining and refuting.

Early in the Christian era also single individuals raised their voices against this book. Philastrius in his "*Hær.* 130" speaks of heretics who reject Solomon's *Ecclesiastes*, because, after having declared all things to be vanity, he leaves but one thing worth caring for, namely, to eat, drink, and gratify one's own soul.

Knobel has, last of all, summed up the rationalistic attacks, bringing against the book the reproach of fatalism, moral scepticism, and moral Epicureanism. "All the moral lessons and admonitions of Koheleth," he maintains, "end in recommending ease and enjoyment in life." Ewald has already given a partial, though a very striking refutation of this assertion: a complete one is contained in the investigation of the contents which has preceded, and in the commentary which follows. Such charges it would be impossible to advance but for the low state to which exegesis has been reduced. But in face of such attacks we feel ourselves able confidently to say, "Come and see."

Against any such profane view of the book as brings it into conflict with the remaining Old Testament canonical literature one fact is by itself a sufficient argument, viz., that the author stands in a most friendly relation thereto. The passage of most importance in this respect is chap. xii. 11, where the writer incorporates his work with the other canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, ascribes to it a deeply penetrating influence, and finds its origin in that divine inspiration which constitutes the boundary line between the literature of revelation and the literature of the world, against which latter, moreover, he gives an emphatic warning in the following verse. In chap. xii. 7 and in chap. v. 3, 4, he re-

fers to the Pentateuch; to the book of Job in the passages already adduced; to Psalm cxviii. 12, in chap. vii. 6; to Psalm cxxxix. 15, in chap. xi. 5; probably to Psalm xli., in chap. xi. 1-3; to Proverbs xxii. 1, in chap. vii. 1; to Zechariah iv. 3, in chap. xii. 6.

A guide to a true estimate of the book may be found in the numerous links of connection between it and the New Testament—especially in the frequent allusions made to it in the discourses of our Lord. Amongst the passages adduced from the New Testament by Carpzov in his *Introd.* ii., p. 212, which he supposes to have reference to Koheleth, only one will bear examination, namely John iii. 8, with which compare Eccles. xi. 5, "As thou knowest not the way of the wind." There are, however, other undeniable references which he overlooked. Compare with chap. i. 1 of Koheleth, Luke xiii. 34; with chap. ii. 1-2, Luke xii. 16-21; with chap. ii. 24, and its parallels, Matthew xi. 19; with chap. iii. 1, John vii. 30; with chap. iii. 2, John xvi. 21; with chap. iv. 17, Luke xxiii. 34; with chap. iv. 17, v. 1, James i. 19; with chap. v. 1, Matthew vi. 7, 8; with chap. v. 5, xii. 6, James iii. 6; with chap. vii. 18, Matthew xxiii. 23; with chap. ix. 10, John ix. 4.

Through a too great dependence on exegetical works such as that of Knobel, a respectable and esteemed representative and upholder of the theology of the church, Dr Oehler, has allowed himself in his *Prolegomena to the Theology of the Old Testament*, and in his *V. T. sententia de rebus post mortem futuris*, to be led into views of this book which in reality do endanger its canonical dignity, however strongly he may disclaim any such intention. According to his opinion the writer is involved in a conflict between faith and knowledge. "The contradiction between the divine perfection and the vanity of the world (more correctly, the sufferings of the people of God) is set before us without any reconciliation being effected. The latter is treated as a matter of undeniable experience: the former is assumed as a religious postulate. The only real wisdom, therefore, in life is *resignation*, which enables a man to use this vain and empty life as well as he can, and at the same time leaves all at the disposal of God." On the one hand, the author teaches that there is a

providence and a retribution, and on the other hand, *omnia vana et consilii expertia esse.* From the point of view of faith, he teaches, in chap. xii. 7, that there is an eternal life: from the point of view of reason, he judges that the soul perishes with the body (chap. iii. 19), that between the good and evil in and after death there is no difference (chap. ix. 2 f.) On this view the book of Koheleth would be the work, and present us the picture, of a distracted heart, of a divided spirit, ἀνὴρ δίψυχος, such as are produced in masses in our own time; and the Holy Scriptures themselves would thus be involved in the conflict they were destined to heal.

Against this we would observe, that it is not correct to say that the book presents to us an unadjusted discord between faith and knowledge, idea and experience. There is of course no denying that, just as in the Psalms, the writer lets scepticism have its say. So far there is truth in the view which distinguishes in the work two voices: but wherever that of scepticism is allowed to speak, it is only for the purpose of at once overcoming it. Nowhere, as a sort of model for the Theology of a de Wette, do doubt and faith stand in front of each other, as forces equally entitled to hearing and existence, but everywhere when the voice of the flesh has spoken, the voice of the Spirit replies in confutation. Such is precisely the case in Psalm xxxix. This is most remarkably evident just in that passage, (chap. ix. 1-10,) in which scepticism pours itself forth like a mighty stream. The expression of "the mood of scepticism and of discontent with life" goes there only as far as ver. 6: in verses 7-10, it is vanquished by the sword of faith. The pretended dualism in regard to the doctrine of eternal life is set aside by the observation that in chap. ix. 2, the voice of the flesh is allowed to be heard in order that immediately afterwards it may be judged and convicted. Chap. iii. 21, when interpreted on correct philological principles, so far from containing a denial, is an express affirmation of eternal life.

Nor is it just to maintain that the author knows of no higher wisdom in life than resignation. Without doubt he teaches that human life often presents difficult enigmas, that it is very hard to understand God's arrangements, and that not unfrequently we find ourselves reduced to blind faith. In chap.

iii. 11, for example, he says: "Man cannot find out the whole of the work which God doeth, neither beginning nor end;" in chap. vii. 24: "far off is that which was made, and deep, deep, who can find it?" in chap. viii. 17: "Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun;" in chap. xi. 5: "As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, like the bones in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the work of God, who doeth all." But who does not see that these are truths which apply still even to those who live in the light of the Gospel? It was not in vain and for nought that the Lord pronounced those blessed who see not and yet believe. The Apostle recommends it to our consideration that we walk by faith and not by sight.*

To recognise everywhere the causes of the divine arrangements, to thread the ways of God so often intricate, demands an eye clearer than the clearest possessed by man. Ever afresh is attention called to the fact that all our knowledge is but fragmentary. In the times of the writer of this book, it was specially important to give prominence to this side, for there were too many who were destitute of clearly seeing eyes, and above all, of that knowledge of sin which gives the key to the sanctuary of God to all those who desire to find there the solution of the problem of this earthly life. But he has not the slightest intention of leaving us altogether to blind faith. The idea never occurs to him of handing over the region of knowledge to unbelief. "Who is as the wise man," he exclaims in chap. viii. 1, "and who knoweth the interpretation of things?" He believes, therefore, that there exists a wisdom which introduces men into the essence of things, which especially throws light into the dark depths of the cross, and justifies the ways of God. The consciousness that he himself, in struggling for wisdom, has attained to important results is expressed in chap. vii. 25, 27: according to chap. xii. 9, he is, by God's grace, a wise man, and competent to instruct the people in a wisdom which harmonises with what was taught

* Even the Christian Poet sings—

"Da werd' ich das im Licht erkennen
Was ich auf Erden dunkel sah
Das wunderbar und heilig nennen
Was unerforschlich hier geschah."

by the wise of former ages, who were all sent by the one Shepherd, (chap. xii. 11.) How far the writer's counsels are from ending in simple "Resignation," to which none are limited but those whom God, because of unbelief, has forsaken, and to whom the gates of the sanctuary do not stand open, (Psalm lxxii. 7,) is plain from the long series of passages in which he announces a termination to the sufferings of the people of God and their approaching victory, at the same time laying bare the causes of their present depression, and justifying it as ordered of the ordering of divine love and righteousness.

COMMENTARY.

THE SUPERSCRIPTION, CHAPTER I. 1.

The words of the Koheleth, the Son of David, the King in Jerusalem. It is not a question of words in general, but of *the* words. There exist no other words spoken by Solomon to the generation then existing. Only in virtue of this mission did he bear the title Koheleth, (compare under chap. xii. 9.) There can be no doubt whatever that Koheleth properly signifies—"The Assembler," (in the feminine.) The Kal form of קהל does not occur otherwise. The participle in Kal must be employed here for the participle in Hiphil—a thing which might the more easily take place as it stands for the noun. The verb is always used of persons, never of things. It is the standing form employed for the calling together of the whole Israelitish community, of the entire people of God. Compare Deut. iv. 10, where we read—"On the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, *gather* me the people *together*, and I will make them hear my words that they may learn to fear me:" Exodus xxxv. 1, —"And Moses *gathered together* all the congregation of the children of Israel, and said unto them, these are the words which the Lord hath commanded that ye should do them: Leviticus viii. 3,—"and *gather* thou all the congregation *together* unto the door of the Tabernacle," (Numbers viii. 9; x. 7:) 1 Kings viii. 1, "then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, &c." The fact of the person who speaks bearing the name Koheleth—which name was as to essentials correctly explained even by Jerome*—indicates the ecclesiastical

* Coeleth, id est Ecclesiastes. Eccl. autem Græco sermone appellatur, qui coetum, id est ecclesiam congreget, quem nos nuncupare possumus *concionatorem*,

character of the book, and its high significance in relation to the entire church of God. In this respect it accords with the commencement of Psalm xlix.: "Hear this all ye people, give ear all ye inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." The wisdom of the Israelites was animated by a spirit moving its possessors to become witnesses of its excellence: it had a thoroughly popular character, it belonged not to the narrow limits of the school but to the spacious courts of the temple: it was a leaven intended to leaven the whole lump. Wisdom, within the Church, was to address itself not merely to a few peculiarly gifted individuals, but has something of importance to communicate to all alike. It is full of compassion like the God who is its fountain: it delights to seek out those who are lost: whereas the wisdom of this world cannot find a bridge over to the simple and ignorant, and has no disposition to interest itself in them. The tendency to association, which has its root in the wisdom coming from above, belongs only to the Church, and therefore, outside its pale, and where its path has been forsaken, we find only isolation and infatuated dissolution. The world is compelled to make the confession, "we all go astray like sheep, we turn, every one of us, to his own way." The name Koheleth occurs three times in the first chapter, namely, in verses 1, 2, 12, three times in the last chapter xii. 9, 10: once in the middle, where it is joined with the feminine, whereas elsewhere it is joined always with the masculine. In chap. xii. 8, the article is joined with it: in the other places the word stands without article as an ideal proper name. That Solomon is intended to be designated by it is plain from the addition of the words, "Son of David, King in Jerusalem," the purpose of which evidently is to anticipate and prevent all doubt in this respect. But in what sense is this applied to Solomon, seeing that in reality it can signify nothing more than "The Assembler" (feminine)? This is a matter of controversy; but there can be no doubt whatever that the title, an explanation of which is given in chap. xii. 9, "Moreover Koheleth was a wise man, and *taught the people knowledge*,"

eo quod loquatur ad populum, et sermo ejus non specialiter ad unum, sed ad universos generaliter dirigatur.

was applied to Solomon, because through him wisdom spake to the people of God, because he was regarded as wisdom personified, besides being its mouth and organ. It is precisely on this ground that his discourses have so decided a significance and importance: for this reason do they bear a canonical character; just as the words of the prophets derived their weight from the presence of the Spirit of Christ in them, (1 Peter i. 11,) from their speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, (2 Peter i. 21,) and as the Apostles also, according to Acts xv. 28, were organs of the Holy Spirit. By his employment of this title, the author indicates that Solomon is not here regarded by him in the light of a philosopher, but as the representative of a higher spirit than his own—of that mind which is alone capable of uttering such things as are of thorough and lasting importance for the people of God. For this, as the only correct explanation of the term, the passage chap. vii. 27, is plainly decisive. There, a contrast is drawn between the Koheleth and the stranger, the foreigner, *i. e.*, philosophy and wanton seduction: and the evidently intentional construction of Koheleth with the feminine, can only be explained by its being descriptive of the wisdom which is from above. A further proof of the correctness of this view is afforded by a comparison with the first nine chapters of the Book of Proverbs, where in fact we have the true key to the designation. The writer would never have chosen this title had he not been able to calculate on readers who would look to those chapters of Proverbs for its meaning, for the solution of his enigma—for with an enigma we evidently have to do here. Those chapters form a kind of porchway or introduction, and before an exposition was given of the particular doctrines of the wisdom which, by God's grace, had fixed its seat in Israel, they were intended to exhibit its real nature, and to kindle a love of it in the hearts of the readers: they were further meant at the same time, to unmask and stir up hatred of its rival false wisdom, the foreigner, which, by its seductive arts, was trying to gain admittance amongst the people of God. Wisdom is then introduced as a person, and as speaking to men.* In its character as Kohe-

* Ch. B. Michaelis on Chap. viii. Quod sapientia hic non ut qualitas sed ut persona inducatur, non inde solum liquet, quod vox, labia, os aliaque, quæ per-

leth, as the Assembler, it is clearly brought forward in chap. i. 20, 21, "wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets. She preacheth in the chief place of concourse: she utters her words in the gates of the city:" further also in chap. viii. 1, ff. From such a personification of wisdom there is but a step to its becoming as it were personal in an individual, as in this Book of Ecclesiastes. To assume such an embodiment of wisdom in a person here is matter of less difficulty, seeing that the like thing occurs undeniably in the New Testament. A comparison of Luke xi. 49, 50, with Matthew xxiii. 34, will leave no room to doubt that in the first passage Christ represents himself as the personal embodiment of wisdom. That there is a connection between these passages and Solomon's appearance as Koheleth, was recognised already by Bengel in his time, and that the two stand in a certain measure on the same line. He says in his Gnomon, on Luke xi. 49, ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ, *sapientia dei. Suave nomen.* Koheleth congregatrix. Chap. xiii. 34, ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυνάξαι τὰ τέκνα σου. In these words from Matthew xxiii. 37, quoted by Bengel, Christ appears to allude to himself as the true Koheleth. The objections which have been urged against the explanation now given of the name Koheleth, especially of the feminine form of it, are untenable. Those who affirm that the author must have expressed himself much more distinctly had he intended to apply to Solomon the title Koheleth because of his standing as the representative of wisdom, overlook the fact that this explanation is involved in the relation existing between this book and the exordium of the book of Proverbs; and further that we are driven to it by chap. vii. 27. When it is objected that a multitude of expressions do not at all correspond to what we might expect from the lips of Wisdom, as, for example, when the person speaking is represented as having contemplated, sought to obtain, and actually gained possession of, wisdom, there is an overlooking of the consideration that Koheleth is not wisdom absolutely, but only so far as it has found an embodiment in Solomon: or, in other words, that

sonarum potius quam rerum sint, ei tribuuntur, v. 1 sqq., sed maxime ex consideratione illorum characterum, qui, v 22 sqq, expressi sunt, ad quos in prologo evangelii Johannis, ubi divina Christi natura adseritur, respectum fuisse, vix quisquam negabit.

Solomon is designated Koheleth from the principle by which he was animated. We have thus also met the objection that Solomon always comes on the scene in the distinctest manner as an actual person, and not as the personification of an idea, and that accordingly reference is made to the experiences of a living person, to the fortunes of a definite individual. Koheleth is not, like Wisdom in the book of Proverbs, a "personified idea," but Solomon himself, who is regarded as the representative, or so to say, as the incarnation of wisdom. The usual course has been to assume without further proof that Koheleth is a sort of surname of Solomon's. "He undertakes the office of a public teacher of truth, and the word Koheleth is intended to point out that he enters here on this definite vocation." A decisive ground against this notion is, that the name is conjoined with the feminine in chap. vii. 27. The assumption that Solomon bears the title Koheleth as the representative of wisdom furnishes the only satisfactory explanation of the alternating conjunction of the word with the masculine, which plainly predominates, and with the feminine. Moreover, on the view above mentioned the feminine form cannot be satisfactorily accounted for. Some appeal to the frequent employment in titles of office, of the abstract word, for persons. "The official is *totus* in the business assigned to him in life, and receives its name as his title." קהלת signifies properly "*preaching*," the office and business of a public speaker: it is then used also of the public speaker himself. So some argue. There are however many difficulties in the way of this position. The feminine termination does undoubtedly serve for forming abstract names (see Ewald, s. 166), but this never takes place with an active participle, and for a very simple reason. From עור "blind," we may indeed form עורת "blindness;" from חטא "sinful," חטאת "sin, sinfulness;" but from קהל "the assembling one," we cannot form קהלת, in the sense of "preaching sermon." Then, no case can be actually adduced of a concrete word being made abstract, and afterwards again employed in a personal sense. For the question, who is the author of this book, it is of no little significance that Solomon does not appear here under his own name, but under that of Koheleth. All the other publications of Solomon bear his usual name on their title-page:

for example, "The Proverbs," whose inscription runs, "The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, the King of Israel;" the "Son of Songs;" Psalms lxxii., cxxvii.: and it is a perfectly natural thing that he who wishes himself to be regarded as the author of any work should employ no other designation than that by which he is already known. To use enigmas, and to play at hide and seek, would be little in place in such a matter. Consequently the writer of this work, in styling Solomon Koheleth pretty clearly indicates that it is only in an ideal sense he is introduced as the author, that he was concerned with the book only as a representative of Wisdom. The very name, which is strictly an impersonal one, shows that the person to whom it is applied belongs to the region of poetry, not to that of reality. Thus we find that the only argument, with any show of reason, for Solomon's authorship, changes sides altogether as soon as it is more carefully examined. The book of Ecclesiastes was not only not actually composed by Solomon, but does not even pretend to have been.*

CHAPTER I. 2-11.

Human life, according to the judgment pronounced on it in Genesis iii. 17-19, is at its best but brilliant misery. Our first parents felt this deeply even in their day. They named one of their two sons Hebel (Abel), that is to say, Vanity. The parents of Noah also confessed this, for they spake at his birth; "this shall comfort us in our toil and work upon the earth, which the Lord hath cursed," (Genesis v. 29). In Genesis xlvii. 9, Jacob says, "few and evil are the days of my life:" in Psalm xc. 10, Moses says, "the days of our years are threescore and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow:" and in Psalm xxxix. 6-7, David exclaims, "Only to utter vanity was every man ordained. Only as a vain show walketh

* What A. Fabricus says of the "Book of Wisdom" in the Bibl. Gr. 3, s. 736, holds quite good in the present instance, viz.: *Perinde ut Salvianus nunquam voluit existimari libros suos a Timotheo esse scriptos discipulo apostolorum, sed satis ipsi fuit sub nobili hoc persona delituisse.*

every man: surely they disquiet themselves in vain; he heapeth up and knoweth not who shall receive it." It is of great importance that this character of our earthly existence, depicted in so affecting a manner in the hymns, "Ah! how empty! ah! how fleeting!" and "alas! what is the life of man?" should become so distinctly a matter of consciousness, that men shall not seek to gild over their misery by vain fancies. Only thus can the vanity to which we are subjected have its right operation, answer its purpose, which is to drive us back to God whom we have forsaken, to bring us into the position of saying with entire truthfulness, "Thou alone, O Jehovah, remainest to me what thou art, in thee I put my trust." It is one of the principal aims of the extraordinary sufferings with which God visits His children, His whole church and individuals, to impress deeply on the mind this vanity of earthly things. It is, however, a difficult process: man proves herein a hard learner. He is ever slow to reconcile himself to the emptiness of earth; he is easily brought to fancy his lot a peculiarly hard one, and he does all in his power to put an end to a condition of things which he deems exceptional. And when he finds it impossible to accomplish his design, he falls a prey to despair. This book is unintelligible except on the historical presupposition that the people of God was in a very miserable condition at the time of its composition. They were bondsmen in their own native land: heathens ruled over them: everywhere reigned degradation and misery. When the foundation of the second temple was laid, the people were moved to bitter tears, as they contrasted the present with the past. Vanity of vanities was the universal cry: alas! on what evil days have we fallen! They said one to another, "How is it that the former days were better than these?" Ecclesiastes vii. 10. In particular did they look back on Solomon and his day with the desperate yearnings of a Tantallus. And then on the ears of the people in such a condition bursts the proclamation of our author, that human life is altogether vanity. Thus on the one hand he administered the consolation lying at the basis of the words, *dulce est solamen miseris socios habere malorum.* The cross is much easier to bear when we see that it is the universal destiny of mankind. And on the other hand, he

suggests powerful motives to a sincere return to God, whose very name Jehovah or Jahve, signifying "the One who absolutely is, Pure Being," constitutes a perfect contrast to the vanity with which every creature separated from Him is justly chargeable.

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.* Ver. 3. *What profit hath man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?* Ver. 4. *One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, and the earth abideth for ever.* Ver. 5. *The sun also riseth, and the sun goeth down, and (goeth) to his place where he eagerly riseth.* Ver. 6. *The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again to its circuits.* Ver. 7. *All rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full: unto the place whence the rivers come, thither they return again.* Ver. 8. *All words become weary, none can utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.* Ver. 9. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which has been done is that which shall be done, and there is nothing at all new under the sun.* Ver. 10. *Is there a thing whereof it may be said, see this is new? It hath been already of old time which was before us.* Ver. 11. *No memorial have they of old; nor shall they who are to come have any remembrance with those that shall come after.*

Ver. 2. That it was the mission of this book to impress on the Church of God the vanity of all earthly things, to convince it that "the world is but a vale of tears, and that everywhere are to be found only needs, troubles, and fears," is externally indicated with sufficient clearness by the fact that the word הבל, "vanity," occurs in it thirty-seven times, whilst in the entire remaining portion of the Old Testament it occurs only thirty-three times. "Vanity of vanities," according to the well known usage of speech, signifies "the utmost vanity." The word "all" is more precisely defined afterwards as "all that is under the sun, whatever belongs to the sublunary world, to this poor earth." It does not include the Creator, whose very name Jehovah, signifying "The self-existent One," "pure, true, absolute being," stands in the completest opposition to vanity: nor does it refer to

union with Him and the joy which is sought in Him (compare chap. xii. 13), but to the poor creatures which since the time spoken of in Genesis iii. have been subjected to vanity (Romans viii. 20). The earth can offer nothing capable of affording true satisfaction and contentment to man. The assertion that "here at the beginning of the work its author gives strongest expression to the bitterness of his own spirit;" rests on an utter misunderstanding. If that were true in this case, it would be equally true in the case of Thomas a Kempis, who commences his "*de Imitatione Christi*" with the words: *Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas præter amare Deum et illi soli servire. Vanitas igitur est divitias perituras quærere et in illis sperare. Vanitas quoque est honores ambire et in altum statum se extollere. Vanitas est carnis desideria sequi, etc.* There can be no word of *subjective* bitterness, for the simple reason that the vanity of all the possessions of this world, and of the efforts spent upon them, is an undeniable *fact*. To recognize this is of the utmost importance, and whosoever helps us to gain this knowledge is an excellent preacher, for he prevents us seeking any longer happiness where it is not to be found, he moderates the pain we feel at losing and being deprived of what is in itself really worthless, and makes us intensely eager to attain to the true source of joy. Negative wisdom is the condition and groundwork of positive. We cannot really see in God the highest good unless we have first of all discerned the vanity of that pretended good which is laid before us by the world. "Soul, why weariest thou thyself with the things of this world?"—such words constitute an admirable commencement when we wish to lead men to God. Vanity of vanities and all is vanity,—to know that is the preliminary condition of a true enjoyment of those pleasures which still spring up in the barren wastes of life. He who has given up making undue claims on life will be able to take with a contented and thankful spirit those joys which present themselves unsought on his path, he will be able to live for the present moment, free from cares and covetousness. "I have laid my account with possessing nothing, and therefore the whole world is mine."

Jerome asks the question how it is reconcileable with God's

having created all things good, to say that all is vanity?* He did not find the proper answer to this question, nor did Luther, who supposes that the writer "does not say this against the creatures, but against the naughtiness of the human heart which will not rest, but makes for itself all kinds of sorrow and misfortune." He does not speak of God's works, "but of those wretched objects beneath the sun with which men are bound up as to their physical constitution, for whose sake they give themselves so much fruitless unrest, trouble and labour." To limit his words entirely to human efforts, contradicts the subsequent carrying out of the thought. Besides, the vanity of human efforts is specially grounded in the vanity of the sphere in which they are put forth. And that vanity is predicable of the whole of that sphere in respect to which God spake the words "very good," (Genesis i.,) is evident from the sentence, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die," —die a death whose crowning point is Death personally so designated. Other evidence to the same effect is borne by Romans viii. 20, according to which the irrational creation is subjected to vanity, and by James iv. 14, where our life is described as ἀτμίς, the same word as that by which Aquila has translated הבל. Not only, then, are human efforts vain, but creation also, in its merely natural aspect, may be included under the description "all is vanity." The true solution of the problem lies here:—Between the words "and behold, everything was good," and those of our author, "all is vanity," the fall of man has intervened. With that, an entirely new order of things was inaugurated. To man in his degeneracy God's creation, though good in itself, was no longer fitted. Hence the complaint, "all is vanity," is not a charge against God, but, on the contrary, when we carefully consider the nature and constitution of man, rather a *praise* of God. It is just in the decreeing of punishment, and the establishment of the economy of the cross, that God specially manifests His glory and greatness. The Berleburger Bible observes: "As it was said in the beginning, *everything is good, everything is very*

* Si cuncta quæ fecit Deus valde bona sunt, quomodo omnia vanitas, et non solum vanitas, sed etiam vanitas vanitatum? Ut sicut in Canticis Canticorum inter omnia carmina excellens carmen ostenditur ita in vanitate vanitatum vanitatis magnitudo monstretur.

good, so also will it once again be said regarding the creature, everything is precious and new, everything is very precious, good, and glorious." "All is vanity,"—cannot be the end of God's ways: it can only be a point of transition. The end must correspond to the beginning. The words—"all is vanity,"—will lose the sad truth they have as respects the present course of the world, in the "regeneration" of which our Lord speaks in Matthew xix. 28, in that blessed age depicted by Isaiah in chap. xi. of his prophecies, and by Paul in Romans viii. As vanity is not the original, so can it not be the final character of the world's constitution and course. Death, the climax of vanity, entered into the world with sin, (see Genesis ii. 17; Romans v. 12.) And therefore when sin has been completely overcome, death also will cease, (1 Cor. xv. 54 f.) and as it is said in Revelations xxi. 4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." All the descriptions of this future contained in the Scriptures, pre-suppose what is expressed in the words, "All is vanity," for they are intended to give courage to those who sigh and groan under vanity, and to save them from despair. So, for example, Isaiah xxv. 6-8,—"And in this mountain the Lord of Hosts prepareth unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He destroyeth in this mountain the face of the covering with which all nations are covered over. (The veil as the sign of sorrow.) He destroyeth death for ever, and the Lord God wipeth away the tears from all faces." Further, Isaiah xxxv. 1 ff.: "The wilderness and the solitary place will be glad, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then will the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness will waters break out and streams in the desert. The parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty land streams of water. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped." But a fundamental condition of our participating in this future glory, is that we attain to a clear and deep insight into the significance of the saying, "All is vanity," that we do not gild over our present misery. Only as this

truth is distinctly understood and intensely felt, will its effect be to drive us to God, who is our everlasting dwelling-place, (Psalm xc.,) and to arouse us to repentance, in that we estimate the extent of our guilt by the severity of the sufferings we have to endure. Such was the feeling of Perthes when he wrote after the death of his beloved wife, "an immeasurable load of guilt must rest on us, seeing we have to suffer such a loss." De Wette brought against St Paul the reproach, that in his writings we encounter sometimes "the discordant tone of contempt of the world." He who with such eyes considers the words "all is vanity," will not only retain his share of trouble, —for say what we may, the world is, and continues to be a vale of tears, notwithstanding that by our forced laughter we should fancy we have changed it into a house of gladness,—but will wantonly rob himself of the wholesome fruit of his sufferings. The bringing in of the new covenant has effected no alteration in that vanity of vanities which our author speaks of so emphatically. The blessings which already accrue to us therefrom belong to an order of things entirely different from that which is here spoken of. They spring not forth from the region beneath the sun but from the kingdom of heaven. The earth meanwhile continues its existence of vanity, and in this its character is a powerful motive pressing men to appropriate the heavenly treasures offered by the Church.

Ver. 3. In ver. 3, is given the result which follows from ver. 2. If "all is vanity," what profit hath man? or strictly "the earthly one, (Geier, *cum aculeo terrenæ fragilitatis*) of all the labour which he taketh under the sun?" There is much ado about nothing. One who has arrived at a knowledge of the true nature of this world receives a strange, yea even a tragicomical impression when he sees men running to and fro, and seeking to snatch the prey from each other's grasp. The results, too, are in the end of scarcely greater compass and importance than those of the movements of an anthill. And then joined with all this, the airs of importance, and the pompous phrases about progress and the like. The best commentary on this verse is furnished by the beautiful hymn of Gryphius beginning—"The glory of the earth, must at last become smoke and ashes." Interpreting these facts according to the mind of the Preacher the practical result

would be to "quit the world, and honour, fear, hope, favour and learning, and to follow only the Lord, who will ever rule, whom time cannot change, and who can confer upon us eternal blessedness."

Ver. 4. The subject of discourse in the context is the vanity of everything earthly, and the consequent fruitlessness of human efforts. Ver. 4. would not at all suit the connection in which it stands, unless the earth be regarded as the scene of vanity and misery which it really is. The generations of men are continually changing, ceaselessly do fresh ones appear on the scene, but O! misery! the earth, against which the curse recorded in Genesis iii. 17-19 was pronounced, on which it is impossible to realise permanent results, or to arrive at abiding happiness, and where men find themselves hemmed in on all hands—that remains. The new generations are compelled always to begin where the old ones ended. That old fable, the rolling of the Sisyphus-stone, is illustrated ever afresh.* לעולם does not stand in contradiction with the doctrine of the impending termination of the present phase of the earth's existence found elsewhere in the Old Testament. As in Genesis vi. 4, עולם, "Time far back beyond the memory of men," so here it designates a future of unmeasured extent: as Rambach has it, *diutissimo tempore, cujus terminus nobis occultus est.*

Ver. 5. The sun here can only be employed as an image of human existence which is straitly confined within the limits of vanity. The natural event cannot, considered in itself, be treated as a subject of complaint, but only as one of joyous wonder and admiration, as is clear from Psalm xix. The mere natural rising and setting of the sun would not form a suitable step in the development of the thought, "vanity of vanities," which is the subject of the writer's comments on to the 11th verse, and which must consequently furnish the test of the correctness of our explanation of all that occurs up to that point. The sun eagerly running through a long course, in order at last to return to the goal from which it started is a true image of human life shut up within the impassable magic-

* Quite improperly says Jerome, "quid hac vanius vanitate, quam terram, manere, quæ hominum causa facta est, et ipsum hominem, terræ dominum, in pulverem repente dissolvi."

circle of vanity. The human race seems unable to move a step. A new generation always begins where the old one ended. Notwithstanding all our much vaunted progress, we continue mainly such as we were of old, "burdened with an inheritance of sin, with weakness, with want and death." "That there is motion, cannot be denied: but it is motion in a circle, and consequently leads to no result," (Hitzig.) Following the example of the Chaldee version, of the Septuagint and of the Vulgate Luther connects ואל מקומו שואף—"And hasteth to his place that he may there rise again." But this mode of connecting the words is contrary to the accents, according to which שואף must belong to what succeeds: and besides, without any justification from usage, it takes the word שאף in the signification of "to run, to hasten." The usual meaning of שאף is "to snap at, to hanker after, anything;" in which sense it is employed here also—"*And (comes then again) to its place where it longingly arises.*" שואף corresponds to the expression found in Psalm xix. 6, "He *rejoices* as a hero to run his course." The first verb furnishes greater definiteness to the second; Ewald, § 285. A new generation advancing to life with fresh courage, resembles the sun in its longing, its joyousness, its eagerness. אל includes the verb.

Ver. 6. In this verse "is described the vanity of the wind, which is continually moving round and round in a circle, and through its swiftness does not succeed in passing beyond this circle." Here also it is quite plain that the author has no intention of blaming anything in the order and arrangements of nature—a thing which would have been revolting and absurd—but that the wind comes under consideration only as a symbol of human existence revolving constantly in the circle of vanity and unable to transcend its bounds however mighty may be the efforts put forth. The entire verse has reference to the wind, and it is fruitless when the Septuagint, the Syriac, Geier, and others, try to refer the first clause to the sun: "which turns not towards the North." South and North are mentioned in the case of the wind, because East and West were used of the sun. The סביבות of the wind are the turns which it has already made.

Ver. 7. As the water of brooks goes first into the sea and then returns back to the brooks, so is there in human affairs

no real result, no progress, no overstepping of the limit of vanity: the old misery manifests itself ever afresh. Luther recognised the symbolical character of the verse, but did not altogether hit upon a right view of the thought contained in it. Says he, "we have in these words a subtle comparison: all men's proposals, all their devices, efforts, care, by which they hope to help the matter, rise with the sun, and go down again; like the water, too, they flow hither and thither; that is, being mere human thoughts, without God's work and furtherance, they remain just what they were. Let that man whose thoughts either do not, or have not come to nought, blot out what Solomon says." That the sea never becomes full is a proof that the streams must return again to the place whence they came. We must render the words, "to the place from which the streams go out." Luther's translation is correct, "to the place whence they flow, they flow back again." The *Construct State* which causes the whole following sentence to be treated as a noun is employed in the same manner in Psalm civ. 8, "unto the place which thou hast founded for them." As to the way and manner in which the waters return to their source commentators are not agreed. Luther thinks "the waters run without ceasing into the sea, and then by secret subterraneous passages or channels run from the sea as fountains and brooks filtering through the earth at their place, penetrating and running through mountains and rocks." It is, however, much simpler to assume that the streams return to their sources through the medium of the clouds. Compare Genesis ii. 6, "and there went up mists from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground:" Job xxxvi. 27, 28, "For he draws forth the drops of water, they pour down rain from the vapour thereof. Thence run the clouds, distil much upon men." In respect of natural processes the Scriptures do not enter upon doubtful hypotheses. They always confine themselves to that which presents itself to the eye of the general observer, to that which is undeniable. Some have deemed it possible entirely to evade the consideration of the problem here presented, and they translate, "Whither the streams go, thither go they ever again:" *i.e.*, they pursue incessantly the same course into the sea. According to this version there would be no refer-

ence whatever to the return of the rivers to their sources. In such a case, however, it is impossible to see what purpose is served by the words, "and the sea becomes not full."

Ver. 8. In interpreting the first half of this verse all depends on whether we take דברים in the sense of *things*, in which it is employed in chap. vi. 11, vii. 8, or in that of *words*. The former view is adopted by Luther. He translates, "All men's doing is so full of toil, that no one can utter it."* On this view the words would be more accurately rendered—"All things are so weary, that no one can utter it," that is, they are inexpressibly weary. Usage does not allow of any further meaning being given to יגע than that of "weary." Tediousness or weariness in the things corresponds to *ennui* in the individual person. Nothing goes on with vigour and freshness: spur and whip are everywhere necessary: the world seems to have outlived itself, for ever since the time spoken of in Genesis iii., it has been under the δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς (Romans viii. 21). From Genesis iii. 17, "cursed be the ground for thy sake, with pain shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life," we should judge the ground itself to be weary: it no longer hastens to give unto man its strength: all has to be pressed and wrung from it by labour. This interpretation, though in some respects very admirable, has against it the correspondence between דברים and דבר "to speak"—a correspondence which is scarcely to be denied. This would lead to the conclusion that the former word is employed here in the signification "*words*," which is the original one, besides being predominant in this book. Accordingly we should find a parallel to the whole of the first half of the verse in Psalm xl. 5, where it is said in respect of the wonderful works of God, "I will declare and speak of them; they are more than can be numbered." *What* is unutterable, inexpressible, we are not here distinctly informed: but the context leaves us in no doubt on that matter, inasmuch as from verse 2 onwards nothing else is spoken of but human misery. Words fail to describe it, and however many we may employ, the description ever falls far

* On this view Rambach gives the sense as follows: Dici non potest quantum laboris et defatigationis rebus et negotiis, humanis omnibus insit. Quidquid dixeris, semper major restabit dicendi materia.

short of the reality. Ever since the day referred to in Genesis iii. man has been the prey of an indescribable sorrow. The words, *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing,* find their commentary in chapter iv. 8, where "his eye is not satisfied with riches," describes an insatiable desire for them; and further in Proverbs xxvii. 20, where the insatiability of the eyes of men also stands for desire that connot be satisfied; "Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied." That man never finds satisfaction in earthly things, but on the contrary is ever asking for yet more and more, is a sign of their emptiness. Such being their nature they can never fill the heart. It is in this respect that they come under consideration in this place, and the two halves of the verse agree therefore in the thought of the vanity of all things earthly. The first describes it as unutterable; the second appeals for proof of the assertion to their inability to appease and fill the heart of man. Luther says, "an exemplification of this may be found in that renowned king and praiseworthy hero, Alexander the Great. In a very brief space of time (for in all he did not reign more than twelve years) he subjugated to himself a large portion of the whole world: and notwithstanding, once upon a time, when he heard a philosopher arguing that there are more worlds than one, he sighed deeply, and said, 'Alas! that I have not as yet subdued more than one world!' So, if he had at once gained ten other worlds, his heart would not have found rest: nay more, it would not have been satisfied with a thousand, or even with countless worlds." What we have already fails to please us, and we long for that which we have not. Knobel's view of the passage, that "the satisfying of the eye and the filling of the ear describes the coming to a termination with the study and meditation of things," is opposed to the parallel place, besides being contrary to the natural meaning of such modes of speech. The eye is satisfied when we have no desire to see more, the ear is filled when we wish to hear no more. In the Berleburger Bible it is remarked, "by the entrances of the soul so many thousands of objects or things are carried into the heart, that man wearies and distracts himself with them as with an infinite sandhill. Out of these his heart forms for him innumerable images which

he contemplates and inwardly busies himself with. Thence arise the manifold thoughts and distracted feelings of us miserable men. This is the cause that, through apostacy from the eternal good, from the Creator, our hearts go forth towards a multiplicity of objects, and, instead of desiring and laying hold on God alone, who would have been an eternally satisfying portion, long for and grasp at thousands of created objects, and still never realise contentment. It is indeed impossible that the immortal soul of man should rest in creatures which are vanity. It seeks ever further and desires ever more: it is like a fire which burns on without ceasing, and would fain bring all within its grasp. But now that it is faint, and out of its true element and life, which is God, behold, the soul finds itself deceived, led astray and threatened with ruin by all creatures, finds that it has wasted its time and energies on things without use, and knows not an object to which it may cling."

Ver. 9. Notwithstanding all the fancies and illusions regarding new and glorious things which men bring forward it is now as it was of old. "*That which is done*" is here considered in its results, and is consequently closely connected with *that which is*. *Being* (Seyn) continues ever what it was of old: consequently the results of doing, of action, cannot show any very important difference. Because the old was bad, it is a great evil that there is nothing new under the sun. There is no alternative but to recur ever to the words, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Man cannot escape out of the charmed circle into which he was driven by the sentence pronounced in Genesis iii., be his exertions what they may. All progress is but vain show and loose varnish. For example, the old covenant, "thou shalt die," still retains its force, notwithstanding all the progress that has been made in the healing art. Luther remarks, "if we understand these words of the works of God, they are not true: for God works and ever produces something new: it is only men and children of Adam who effect nothing new." This is perfectly well grounded. We have here to do with Negative Philosophy, which searches into the nature of things apart from God. The author's intent is to show what is the matter with earthly and human affairs considered in themselves, to tear up by the roots the countless

illusions to which the natural man so readily resigns himself, and by which he frustrates the purpose of the divine judgment pronounced in Genesis iii. The vanity of earthly things can only lead men to God when it is thoroughly felt and understood. For parallels to the words, *there is nothing new under the sun,* reference may be made to Jeremiah xxxi. 22, "behold I create a new thing in the land," and to Isaiah lxv. 17, "behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind," (compare lxvi. 22.) In Matthew xix. 28, the Lord promises the regeneration or the renewal of the world. According to 2 Peter iii. 13, "we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." In the Apocalypse, chapter xxi. 1, John sees a "new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." He who sits on the throne says there, in verse 5, "behold I make all things new." According to chapter xxi. 2, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descends from heaven." At the bottom of all these passages lies the tacit presupposition that "there is nothing new under the sun." The assumption from which they start is that the old earth is a scene of vanity, that all efforts to change it, originating in and depending on its own resources, are utterly fruitless, and that a true alteration cannot be effected from below, but only from above. They comfort us also in the midst of the misery which is our lot, by the assurance that a renewal from above will in fact be accomplished. The new creation will begin at the point where vanity took its rise, even with man: "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new," (2 Corinthians v. 17.) Thence will the renovation pass to the rest of creation. Nothing new is done under the sun—this should serve to bring down the lofty imaginations which would gather grapes from the thorns of this world, but not to discourage the friends of the kingdom of God, whose true seat is not under the sun, but above it, and whose heavenly protector, by ever creating new things, furnishes materials for new songs, (Psalm xl. 3.)

Ver. 10. Many an undertaking gives promise at its commencement of passing beyond the limits fixed by the old curse-laden world. The world exultingly shouts them wel-

come. But very soon it becomes evident that in them also a worm is concealed, and they sink down to a level with that which our poor earth has produced in former ages. So was it with the happiness of the days of Solomon, in the background of which there lay decay and ruin, and whose end was such, that men were driven to exclaim, "Lord have mercy," and, "Oh! that thou wouldest rend the heavens and wouldest come down!" It still remains a truth that "here is no true good to be found, and what the world holds in itself must vanish in a moment."

Ver. 11. A fond dream of this world is to possess the immortality of renown. Even this barren consolation is here taken away, and so a conclusion is made to the development of the thought contained in ver. 3, that man has no profit of all the labour which he taketh under the sun. In accordance with the sentiment of this verse is the hymn by Joh. Pappus, "I have committed my cause to God;"* and another by Andreas Gryphius, of which verses are quoted below.† Contrary to the divergent explanations of these verses, it is to be observed that ראשנים and אחרנים are always "the earlier" and "the later." See Leviticus xxvi. 45; Deuteronomy xix. 14; Psalm lxxix. 8; Isaiah lxi. 4; xli. 4; Ecclesiastes iv. 16. "The earlier," (neuter gender,) is ראשנות in Isaiah xlii. 9. The parallel passages also in chap. ii. 16; ix. 5, serve to put aside every other explanation.

In chap. i. 12,-ii. 26, Koheleth demonstrates the vanity of earthly things, from his own example—from his own personal

* "Man trägt eins nach dem Andern hin
Wohl aus den Augen und aus dem Sinn
Die Welt vergisset unser bald
Sey jung oder alt
Auch unserer Ehren mannigfalt."

† "Der Ruhm nach dem wir trachten
Den wir unsterblich achten
Ist nur ein falscher Wahn.
Sobald der Geist gewichen
Und dieser Mund verblichen
Fragt Keiner was man hier gethan."

experience.* He begins in chap. i. 12-18, with Wisdom. This was one of the brilliant possessions of the age of Solomon, as may be seen from 1 Kings x. 8, where the Queen of Sheba says, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and behold thy wisdom," (compare Matthew xii. 42,) and back to it the after-world looked, with all the more astonished admiration and painful longing, because even the heathen nations, under whose scorn and contempt they sighed, were struck by it with amazement. In the delineation of the glory of Solomon given in 1 Kings x., wisdom occupies the first place: then follows riches. Hitzig's account of the contents and connection of verses 12-18 is as follows: "the speaker tells who he is and how he has come thus to express himself. He has maturely reflected on the works and ways of men, and found that they are feeble and foolish, verses 12-15. Moreover, according to his experience, the wisdom which one may gain is not to be regarded as a good." The subject of the entire section is rather wisdom, and the vanity of earthly things and of human efforts comes under consideration only so far as it conditions the vanity of wisdom. In verse 13, the assertion is made, the thesis is maintained, that "wisdom is not a good but a plague." The following is the proof. Earthly things which are the object of wisdom are vanity, and the more deeply we search, the more distinctly is their vanity seen. Wisdom destroys illusions. The possession of wisdom, therefore, can only bring distress and pain. The wiser a man is, the more unhappy. If the world is nothing and vanity, the wisdom, the science of this world cannot be of much value.

Failing to see that this section has exclusive reference to wisdom, we shall also mistake the entire course of thought. In the following verses, there is a continuation of the proof of the vanity of earthly things from Solomon's own personal experience. Here wisdom is the subject: before, it was the possession and enjoyment of the good things of this world.

Ver. 12. *I Koheleth was King over Israel in Jerusalem.*

* Hieronymus: huc usque præfatio generaliter de omnibus disputantis: nunc ad semitipsum redit, et quis fuerit, quomodo experimento universa cognoverit docet.

Ver. 13. *And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning everything that is done under the sun: this is a sore travail which God hath given to the sons of men, that they may exercise themselves therewith.* Ver. 14. *I saw all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and delusive effort.* Ver. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be reckoned.* Ver. 16. *I communed with mine own heart and said, Lo, I have increased and gotten more wisdom than all that were before me in Jerusalem, and my heart saw much wisdom and knowledge.* Ver. 17. *And I gave my heart to know wisdom and the knowledge of madness and folly: I perceived that this also is delusive effort.* Ver. 18. *For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

Ver. 12. Koheleth refers first of all to his royal position. For the matter in hand this is of no small importance. If the life of earth could offer genuine good it must undoubtedly have been at the command of the king.* Even in regard to wisdom his position has its advantages. He has a wide and extensive view of all that is done under heaven (*ver.* 13). The whole region of human life lies spread out before him. His position is much more favourable than that of the man who philosophizes in a narrow corner. He is still more favoured as regards those regions which are spoken of in chap. ii. 1 ff. Koheleth says—*I was king.* According to Ewald, Elster, and others, the preterite employed here is intended to indicate the historical point of view of the author, for which Solomon's life was so completely a something past and gone, that he involuntarily represents Solomon as speaking of his own life in the preterite. In point of fact, however, the use of the preterite is no argument against Solomon's being the author of the book. Nor, if the composition is assigned to a later period, is it a proof of its fictitious character that the writer in this place forgets himself. The preterite is very frequently employed in descriptions of a past which stretches forward into the present, and therefore is it

* Cartwright, "ut nihil subsidii deesset, cujus beneficio, quod assectatus sum, assequerer."

remarked, with perfect justice, in the Berleburger Bible—"I the preacher have been king thus far, and am one still: to him therefore there has been no lack of opportunity of trying experiments and of getting experience." The words, *In Jerusalem,* need not, as has been affirmed, be supposed to refer to another kingship which had not its seat in Jerusalem. They are meant to remind us that Koheleth had gone through the experiences of which he speaks in that very place whose complainings and sighings gave rise to the composition of this work.

Ver. 13. Koheleth informs us that his efforts to search out the nature of things had yielded wretched results. Concerning the relation to each other of the two verbs דרשׁ and תּוּר Hitzig remarks—"That which withdrew itself from the gaze of the דּוּרשׁ, that which lay deeper, that which was secret he sought to *explore.*" But תּוּר is not "search after, spy out," but "try thoroughly, test," (see Deuteronomy i. 33, Numbers x. 33, Ezekiel xx. 6); taken strictly it signifies "to follow the trace of things," as opposed to a decision which is arrived at from preconceived opinions. Hitzig says further—"It is not meant that he set himself to collect facts: he did not need to inquire what it is that takes place, but what is the nature of that which takes place." To this view we are directed not only by the word תּוּר, here rightly explained, but further also by the construction with עַל. Investigations are set on foot in respect of material lying ready to hand. The Vulgate translates בּחכמה by *sapienter;* Luther by "wisely." But this rather dissipates the force of the word. It is wisdom that is the catchword. Nor is it without good reason that the word is pointed with the article. Wisdom is the instrument employed in carrying out the investigation. The object of the investigation is all that is done or happens under the sun. We are not to suppose, however, that it refers predominantly, much less exclusively, to the moral aspects of human action, but rather, as appears from a comparison of ver. 15 with chap. vii. 13, mainly to the results thereof. All that takes place beneath the sun belongs to the sphere which had its origin in the fall of man, is tainted with sin, and is attended by sin's fell train of suffering and punishment. Everywhere the earth shows itself to be a scene of vanity.

"Ah! how vain, how fleeting, are the days of man! Like a stream that begins its flow and never stays in its course, so hurries our time away. Ah! how vain, how fleeting are the joys of men! As the hours and seasons, as light and darkness, as peace and conflict, so change our pleasures." The business of searching more deeply into earthly things by means of wisdom is described as a vexing misfortune which God has apportioned to the sons of men that they may vex themselves with it. Following in the steps of the LXX. several commentators explain the words as follow—"that is an evil business which God has appointed to the children of men, that they may busy themselves with it." But ענה elsewhere occurs only in the signification of "to suffer;" for this reason therefore the word עִנְיָן, which is never met with out of this book, and which here stands in the *Stat. constr.*, can only signify "suffering, vexation." It has the same meaning also in chap. v. 2, and in all other places. In ver. 18 chagrin and pain correspond. Hitzig wishes to refer the words—*This is a sore travail which God hath given to the sons of men that they may exercise themselves therewith*—to that which happens, which is done. It is quite clear, however, that they refer to the search instituted by means of wisdom. The assertion that in this way verses 17 and 18 are anticipated rests on a mistaken view of the connection between the verses of this section. The words at the close—*I recognised also that this is empty effort*—manifestly take up again the theme of the commencement after proof has been advanced. To our mind verses 17 and 18 render it impossible to understand by the "sore travail" any thing but wisdom in search of truth. The affliction does not consist, as Clericus conceived, merely in the misuse of the gift, but in the gift itself. More deeply examined, however, it is a wholesome affliction. That which is bitter to the mouth is healthy for the heart. That deeper view of the vanity of earthly things which wisdom affords drives us nearer to God. Thus we see that wisdom is a part of the great apparatus by which God humbles fallen man and prepares the way for his redemption. Wisdom presents other aspects also for consideration besides that which has here been noted. And even if that which has been here especially under view is but one side of the truth, it is still

the most important side. Thus much may be regarded as settled—that inasmuch as wisdom yields so melancholy a result, it cannot be the highest good, it cannot be that good which will satisfy the wretched heart of man. Earthly things must be far other than they are, before wisdom can quicken and refresh the soul. Some have thought that the author's reason for calling the efforts put forth in search of wisdom a sore travail was, "that they do not afford distinct information relative to the cause and connection of the processes of human life." This is however a mere guess. Koheleth informs us afterwards why he deems wisdom a sore travail. The only ground assigned by him is, that that which has only the effect of placing in a clearer light the vanity under which men groan, must itself also be vanity: that is, considered simply in itself and apart from the service it renders as a means to another end, wisdom is not a good but a sorrow, is not at all a thing for whose sake Solomon and his age should be envied, for whose loss we should vex ourselves. It is thoroughly true, as has been said, that "a man is foolish who vexes himself about a handful of vanity when God presents him with treasures which ever abide. If thy gains are counted by thousands why trouble thyself about a mite?"

Ver. 14. As part of the proof of his thesis—*this is a sore travail*, the author now asserts the vanity of the object with which wisdom is occupied. Ewald translates—"all the deeds which take place under the sun:" but מעשה does not signify "deed" but "matter of fact." Of course "the ways of men" are referred to, but specially in respect to their consequences, to such facts as those which gave rise to the heathenish saying, "the Gods are envious," and which the Poet had in his eye when he wrote, "He who had shown himself as a Lion, who had wrestled with the Giant, was overcome by a little straw." The words רעות and רעיון are peculiar to Koheleth. The usage of speech in Chaldee from which they are evidently borrowed, decides their meaning. In Ezra v. 17, we find רעות used in the sense of "will:" in Daniel several times in the sense of "thought." The derivation of the words is consequently sought in רעה, "to feed," then "to feed oneself on anything," "to busy oneself with anything;" see Hosea xii. 1, "Ephraim feedeth on the wind, and hunteth

after the East wind;" Isaiah xliv. 20; Proverbs xiii. 20; xv. 14. An "empty striving," (LXX. προαίρεσις πνεύματος,) is a striving without result, such a striving as brings no true genuine good to realization.

Ver. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be brought into position:* תקן does not signify "straight," but "to be in position," to "come into position," in Syriac, "to be arranged, to be ordered;" LXX. διεστραμμένον οὐ δυνήσεται ἐπικοσμηθῆναι. From the parallel passage, chap. vii. 13, it is evident that the writer speaks of imperfections, not only as seen in human ways, but also in the arrangement of the world, *i. e.* of those things in the order of the world which wear an appearance of imperfection as long as the fall of man is foolishly ignored. Hitzig gives the meaning therefore correctly as follows,—"Man cannot alter that which is unjust in the divine arrangement of the world; he cannot bring it from a state of imperfection to one of perfection." Knobel thinks that the writer here "betrays his fatalistic view of the world, according to which everything pursues so firm and unalterable a course that no modification whatever thereof is possible." The question here however is not one of *opinion*, but of undeniable *facts*. The world is actually a vale of tears, everywhere are wants, trouble, fears: and on this rock break all the attempts made to establish what men deem the best system of things. For the rest, the author is not discoursing of the "fixed and unalterable course" of things in particular, but only of the general character of human affairs and of earthly relations, which must necessarily, are by God intended to, reduce to despair those who seek their satisfaction in them:—"man is not to that end here that he may possess earth." *That which is wanting cannot be reckoned*, which is as much as to say that, where nothing is nothing can be counted, human life consists entirely of nulls. In opposition to usage, several translate, "that which is wanting cannot be supplied." מנה signifies only "to reckon, to count." Luther has several excellent remarks on this verse of which we must make mention. "Cicero writing from his own experience says, "Alas! how constantly it happens that as sure as anything has been devised and planned for the best, and with the greatest industry, it turns out so badly and so strangely!" God however herein does well, that

He blows away and brings to nought whatever man meditates and undertakes. For as soon as any plan of us men succeeds a little, from that hour we begin to take the honour to ourselves. Forthwith ambition begins to stir within us, and we think to ourselves, this have I done, for this are my country and fellow men indebted to me; and we grasp at the honour which belongs alone and entirely to God. Wherefore, if God is to continue Lord, and to assert and maintain His first commandment, He must only suffer the lesser part of our thoughts to turn out well, and both in the courts and councils of kings and princes, and in all other affairs, so soon as, and whenever anything has been deliberated and determined, show that the words "if God wills it" still retain their full force. Heathen and ungodly men, who alike fancy that it is enough if they themselves have resolved, must in this wise learn that there has been One absent from their counsels, who has a clear right to a voice therein, and His name is God. Therefore is it the best course and the highest wisdom, to leave and commend all to God, not to plague and worry ourselves too much with our own thoughts, but to follow the wise man who at last, after great experience declared—"Let things go as they go, for do what we may they will go as they go." And how frequently do we see that cunning and prudent rulers, and people who in other respects are exalted and wise, do the greatest mischief, whilst setting themselves with all earnestness, with great restlessness, labour and industry to make all things good. For on earth, under the sun, there never can be established a state of things so good that all will move on evenly, that there will not be still many imperfections, many faults. Wherefore, the best thing of all, is to build and confide heartily on God, to commit the ordering of all to Him, to let Him rule, to pray as the Lord taught us—"thy kingdom come"—and meanwhile patiently to bear and suffer all manner of wrong from the ungodly and wicked, leaving our case in the hands of the great Judge.—When, then, although thou art wise and holy, and pious, and remarkest that many things go wrong, thou hast notwithstanding no power to make all straight that is crooked, do the work with which thou art entrusted, apply thyself with all industry to thy calling: all else that refuses to be rectified, leave to Him who is stronger

and wiser than thou, to the good God in Heaven who can rule churches, country, people, princes, house, estate, wife and children better than thou."

Ver. 16. The character of earthly things being such as is described in verses 12 and 15, that wisdom which busies itself with the understanding of their nature, cannot, as the author now shows, have the significance of the highest good, it cannot truly satisfy the soul, but must rather increase its pains. Koheleth says here that in respect of wisdom he surpassed all who came before him in Jerusalem. Gousset, Rambach, and others explain these words to be—"all the great in Jerusalem," of whom there were many in the days of Solomon and David. But it is clear from chap. ii. 7, that kings only are referred to. Jerusalem was the seat of a very ancient monarchy, a noble representative of which meets us even in the time of the Patriarchs. The title borne by these kings, namely, King or Lord of Righteousness, Melchizedek, Adonizedek, leads to the conclusion that they were animated by higher purposes and aims than many around them. Hitzig is of opinion that, "if the author does allude to the old heathen kings, there is something incongruous in it, and in this turn given to the thought, a later writer, one moreover not particularly well versed in history, (!) seems to betray himself, to whose mind was present the series of kings who had reigned since Solomon." But if we attentively examine the passages in the "Books of the Kings," on which the author takes his stand, this comparison with heathen kings will no longer be found incongruous. In 1 Kings iii. 12, the Lord says to Solomon, "Lo! I give thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." Here the prerogative of wisdom is ascribed to Solomon, not merely amongst the kings of Israel, as Clericus and others conceived, but amongst kings in general. Examples occurring in heathen countries are also included in the comparison. More distinctly still is the same thing seen from 1 Kings iv. 29, "and God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore:" ver. 30, "and Solomon's wisdom excelled all the wisdom of the children of the East country, and all the wisdom of Egypt:" ver. 31,

"and he became wiser than all men: and his fame was in all the nations round about:" ver. 34, "and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom." Then again in chap. x. 23-24, "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and wisdom; and all the earth sought the face of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart." That there was in Solomon's wisdom an element, by virtue of which it might justly be compared with analogous phenomena of the heathen world, is plain even from the visit of the Queen of Sheba, as well as from the sphere within which, as we learn from 1 Kings iv. 33, it moved. His thoughts ran on natural things, on that which was under the sun. Koheleth's comparison of himself with heathen kings in regard to wisdom is an important item in the determination of the true idea of this wisdom: whence also we shall more clearly understand both the depreciatory judgment he pronounces upon it and the presupposition with which he starts, viz., that the people of God were at that time destitute of the wisdom. His intention was thus to comfort them on account of their loss, and to teach them not to set too high a value on the possession. A wisdom in respect of which it may be said that Solomon only had *more* than heathen kings could not be the wisdom which is from above, which had established its seat in the midst of the covenanted people, and the possession of which was inseparable from their existence: it could not be the wisdom which coincides with true piety, which affords true knowledge of God, and which in His light enables us to understand man and earthly things. No! a wisdom which can bear such a comparison must be earthly, of this world. With this agrees what is said in verse 13 respecting the sphere of this wisdom. Its efforts are only directed to search out and fathom what takes place under heaven: the wisdom which cometh from above strives, above all things, to penetrate into the depths of the Godhead. That the wisdom of Solomon does not coincide with that which is described in James i. 5, that on the contrary it has a common basis with the wisdom of the heathens, being only distinguished therefrom by the illumination which it receives from the light of revelation and of the Spirit of God, might be judged even

from 1 Kings iii. 12. When it is in that place said,—"Lo! I give thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee,"—there is certainly no intention of setting Solomon above Moses, in contradiction to Numbers xii. and Deuteronomy xxxiv., nor even above David: the words rather imply that his wisdom was considered as essentially different from that possessed by men of God properly so called, and not to be brought into comparison with it.* In this wisdom, so brilliant and splendid as even to attract the attention of Gentiles, but which, according to what follows, stood on a like level with the possession and enjoyment of this world's goods, Solomon held the first place. The present, so poor in every respect, had no alternative but to look up to him. But that that true wisdom which even children may possess, yet remained, is manifoldly and expressly asserted afterwards (compare chap. vii. 12, 13, 20, 21, x. 14-18).

Ver. 17. Having attained to the highest pinnacle of wisdom, and having by its aid searched into earthly things, Solomon now proceeds to investigate the instrument itself employed in his researches, and arrives here at a humiliating result. The course pursued by Solomon, of inquiring into folly along with wisdom has its ground in the fact that his aim was to determine the worth of wisdom in relation to folly. Besides, as a general truth, contraries explain each other, as Hieronymus says *contrariis contraria intelliguntur*:† for which reason also at the commencement of the Book of Proverbs, wisdom and folly are constantly contrasted with each other.

* Seb. Schmidt remarks on this passage: Mosis enim Prophetarum et Apostolorum potior sapientia erat potius illuminatio immediata aut revelatio, quam sapientia cordis. Intelligitur sapientia acuti ingenii, omnia cum studio penetrantis quæ non sunt immediatæ revelationis, sed scrutaminis et judicii, eaque infusa fuit ratione perfectionis, non initii. A natural gift constitutes the basis, an inclination towards speculative inquiries which examines and seeks to penetrate into the nature of things.

† Following the Septuagint, Luther translates: "Wisdom and folly and *prudence*." But that שכלות in this place is only another mode of writing סכלות "Folly," is so clearly evident from the parallel passages chap. ii. 12, vii. 25, x. 13, that one cannot conceive how it has been possible for Stier to keep to the translation "prudence."

Ver. 18. According to what has hitherto been advanced, the reason of the pain and discomfort which result from the possession of wisdom must be found in the fact that it lays bare the vanity of earthly things. When wisdom is looked upon as a means to higher ends, this is an advantage. To recognise the true character of earthly things can be wholesome only when we are thereby driven to lay hold on the one real Being, on God, who is an everlasting refuge in the midst of the vanities of earth. It shows, however, that wisdom, considered in itself, in isolation from other and higher things, is but a comfortless sort of good. Luther saw the true reason of the discomfort and pain. His words are, "Great people who have a great understanding, and see further than others, who have had much experience, cannot help frequently being angry with themselves and thinking in great disgust, how wicked and scandalous is the course of things in this world! But whence does it arise that such persons are so impatient, and become so angry? The answer is: where there is much understanding and wisdom, there is much discontent! For such people see and think much, and consequently find in the world all manner of crimes, wickednesses, falseness, unfairness, which others never see nor dream of: and that gives pain. Others who do not see so far, nor think so much, do not take it to heart: therefore also it causes them little trouble or pain. Whosoever, then, desires to be a good Christian and to lead a godly life, let him learn to endure patiently, and commit the ordering of things to God, let him learn to pray heartily the petition taught us by Christ, 'thy will be done;' otherwise he will only plague himself in vain, make his own life hateful to himself, and lose besides time and everything."‡ We must interpret—

‡ Many commentators have missed the right sense through giving themselves up to mere guesses. So, for example, Hieronymus: Quanto magis quis sapientiam fuerit consequutus, tanto plus indignatur subjacere vitiis et procul esse a virtutibus, quas requirit. (According to verse 13, Wisdom applies itself to the consideration not merely of that which is within, but of all that takes place under heaven). Nisi forte et hoc intelligendum, quod sapiens vir doleat tam in abdito et profundo latere sapientiam, nec ita se præbere mentibus ut lumen visui; sed per tormenta quædam et intolerabilem laborem, jugi meditatione et studio provenire. Hitzig has "much discontent or chagrin;" namely, during the search for truth which is in many ways wearisome and often fruitless.

Whoso increases knowledge increases sorrow. יוסיף is, as a participial form, without example. In Isaiah xxix. 14, xxxviii. 5, also it is *Fut. Hiphil.*

CHAPTER II.

From wisdom Koheleth turns to the pursuit of mirth, in order to see whether the true good is to be found in it, but here again he finds not what he sought, he finds nothing to still the cravings of his heart (ver. 1 and 2). After this preliminary survey there follows the fuller exposition. Taking the coarsest first, Koheleth tries what wine drinking will do, (ver. 3). Then he seeks pleasure in great works and improvements (verses 4-6), in rich possessions, brilliant connections, and in the manifold enjoyments of love (verses 7-8) at the same time not renouncing wisdom, but keeping it as his companion in all his undertakings, and letting it be their very life and soul, (ver. 9). He follows after mirth with all eagerness, intending thus to obtain a recompense for the great trouble caused him by the procuring of the material of pleasure (ver. 10). On a closer examination, however, this pleasure also evades his grasp, and so all his pains and efforts appear to him vain, (ver. 11). The one thought alone that all that which he has effected by his wisdom will be inherited, to judge from the usual course of things in this world, by an evil successor, mixes gall with the satisfaction with which he regards his creations, (ver. 12). Reflecting on the matter more carefully he sees that wisdom has undoubtedly a considerable advantage over folly (verses 13-14*a*); but still this advantage is not of such a nature that a man can sincerely rejoice in it and its creations, that he can seek the happiness of his life in it and devote himself with all zeal to the production of such works. Wisdom is unable to protect us against many misfortunes, (verses 14*b*-15). The same forgetfulness covers the wise man no less than the fool in the future; and how sadly does death, to which the wise man is subject no less than the fool, destroy all joy in wisdom and its creations, (ver. 16-17). And, to recur to that which was anticipatorily mentioned in ver. 12, the thought of a wicked suc-

cessor stifles completely the satisfaction felt in the works effected at the cost of so much labour and in the wisdom therein manifested (verses 18-21). Mirth being spoiled by such considerations, there remain behind only the manifold pains and disquiet occasioned to man by the production of that wherein he was to rejoice (verses 22-23). Surely, then it is better for man to renounce such a chase and hunt, to live for the present moment, and to take the enjoyments which offer themselves unsought. And yet such a cheerful enjoyment of the gifts of God is not in a man's own power: it comes from God, who must Himself make our hearts capable of enjoyment, and deliver us from the bonds of avarice (verses 24-26).

The moral of all this is—look not back with painful longings to Solomon and his age, though so brilliant and though apparently so rich in pleasures. More closely considered its wealth of mirth was vanity. That unseen source of joy, from which Solomon actually drew whatever of pleasure he realized, is still open to you notwithstanding the needy position in which you find yourselves. Guard then against shutting yourselves out from it by a base and contemptible covetousness.

Ver. 1. *I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth and look upon good, and behold, this also is vanity.* Ver. 2. *To laughter I said, Thou art mad; and to mirth, What doeth it?* Ver. 3. *I sought in mine heart to nourish my flesh with wine; and my heart prosecuted wisdom, and I purposed to lay hold on folly, till I might see what is good for the children of men, what they should do under heaven, the number of the days of their life.* Ver. 4. *I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards.* Ver. 5. *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits.* Ver. 6. *I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.* Ver. 7. *I bought servants and maidens, and servants were born to me in my house: also I obtained cattle and sheep in multitude, more than all that were in Jerusalem before me.* Ver. 8. *I gathered me also silver and gold, and a treasure of kings and the provinces: I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the children of men, plenty of all*

sorts. Ver. 9. *And I became great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem, and my wisdom remained to me.* Ver. 10. *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour.* Ver. 11. *And I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour with which I had laboured to produce; and, behold, all was vanity and empty effort, and is no profit under the sun.* Ver. 12. *And I turned myself to behold wisdom and madness and folly. For what* (will) *the man* (do) *that shall come after the king? That which they have already done.* Ver. 13. *And I saw that wisdom has an excellency over folly, like the excellency of light over darkness.* Ver. 14. *The wise man has his eyes in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness. But nevertheless I know that one event happeneth to them all.* Ver. 15. *Then said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool so also can it happen even to me, and why then have I been so very wise? And I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.* Ver. 16. *For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever, seeing that in the days to come all is forgotten; and how dieth the wise man with the fool?* Ver. 17. *And I hated life, for evil appeared to me the history which takes place under the sun; for all is vanity and empty effort.* Ver. 18. *And I hated all my labour which I had laboured under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that shall be after me.* Ver. 19. *And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have been wise under the sun: this also is vanity.* Ver. 20. *And I turned myself to cause my heart to despair of all the labour wherein I laboured under the sun.* Ver. 21. *For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom and in knowledge and in ability, and yet to a man that hath not laboured therein, must he give it for his portion; this also is vanity and a great evil.* Ver. 22. *For what hath man of all his labour and of the striving of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?* Ver. 23. *For all his days are sorrows, and discontent is his plague; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This also is vanity.* Ver. 24. *Is it*

not good for man that he eat and drink and make his soul see good in his labour? I saw that this also cometh from the hand of God. Ver. 25. *For who eateth and who hasteneth except me?* Ver. 26. *For to the man that is good before Him giveth He wisdom and knowledge and joy; and to the sinner He giveth travail to gather and heap up, that he may give it to him that is good before God: this also is vanity and empty effort.*

Ver. 1-2. In these two verses the new experiment and its results are described in broad outline: in the third and following verses these summary hints are carried out in detail. Not only for his wisdom was Solomon renowned, but also for his possessions and pleasures; and in this latter respect also was his age an object of devouring yearnings to the people of God in their day of tribulation and oppression. Therefore does the author introduce Solomon with the confession on his lips that behind even that glory vanity lay hid. When the writer says, "I spake," the "I" is emphatic: "*I* spake." Some will have it that אני frequently occurs in this book along with the first person of the verb superfluously even where no emphasis whatever is intended, as for example in chap. i. 16, ii. 11, 14, 18, iii. 17. In such cases, however, אני is by no means pleonastically used. It calls attention to the importance of the person who is speaking, who is declaring his experiences. An address to the soul similar to the one here may be found in Psalm xvi. 2. The heart is to be proved, whether perchance it feels itself contented and fully satisfied by this new object presented to it. The *mirth* is that which springs from possessions and pleasures. The words which follow immediately upon, and are directly connected with, these, namely, *look upon good*, (ראה signifying with ב "look upon, to feed oneself upon,") show that verses 1 and 2 do not relate merely to a life of low and coarse gratification, but that they have a more comprehensive application. The *laughter* mentioned in ver. 2 is that which accompanies common sensual gratification: *mirth* or *joy* is not identical with laughter, but has a more comprehensive signification, as is clear from ver. 10. Extravagant mirth, the intoxication of the senses, at once shows itself to be vanity (ver. 3). But even the joy taken in earthly projects and possessions does not stand the test. Ver. 11 forms

the comment to the question, "What doeth it?" of ver. 2. Geier says: "Why dost thou thus befool men and lead them basely away from the true good?" We should involve Koheleth in self-contradiction were we to ascribe to him here the thought, that all joy is vain and despicable. He rather takes special pains to urge men to take pleasure in their life, to live for the present moment, and thankfully to enjoy whatever it offers. That which he here condemns is mirth considered as the highest good, as the end of life, and the too great eagerness displayed in its pursuit. Luther has seized exactly the right point of view: "that this is true, experience tells us. For many a man arranges all his affairs and puts forth much trouble and labour, that he may ensure to himself quiet and peace in his old age: and yet God orders it otherwise, and involves him in things which give him his first true taste of disquietude. Many an one seeks his pleasure in lust and debauchery, and from that hour onwards his life is embittered. Therefore, if God does not give us joy and pleasure, but we seek to contrive and create them for ourselves, nothing comes of it; and on the contrary, as Solomon says, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. We can do nothing better then than willingly to accept and put up with that which God does to us and for us, and to accustom our heart to be satisfied and contented with that which God each moment sends us, be it good or evil, sorrow or joy. If a wife is given thee, regard it as a gift of God, thank Him, and be cheerful and contented. But if thou settest thyself to go beyond this, and to add thereto thy human devices, thinking to secure only gratifications and joys, honeymoons, and merry-makings, thou wilt make for thyself sadness and sorrow of heart. For this reason, should we accustom ourselves to resting satisfied with what God does and gives, with what He wills and intends, and not with what we will and intend. Solomon's intention, then, is not to induce all the world to turn hermits and monks, to cast away all joy, mirth, pastime, all rest, comfort, amusement: what he means to say is, that thoughts and proposals are nothing when we think by their help to make to ourselves rest and peace, recreation and good courage. The truest joy and merriment is that which we do not expressly seek (for when we plan beforehand a little

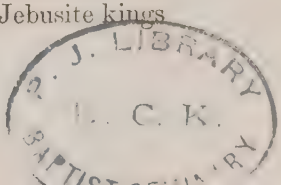
hindrance may frustrate the whole), but which God sends us at the moment." In verses 1 and 2 we have undoubtedly the germ of the parable in Luke xii. 16-21. This may be seen from the similarity of the address to the soul which there occurs; from the words ἔχεις πολλὰ ἀγαθά there as compared with the expression, "Look upon good," here; from the word εὐφραίνου compared with, "I will prove thee with mirth," ἄφρον corresponding to מהולל; and finally from the words ἃ δὲ ἡτοίμασας τίνι ἔσται (ver. 20) as compared with the 12th verse of this chapter—"For what will the man do that shall come after the king?" (compare ver. 19.)

Ver. 3. First of all mirth in its coarsest form, intoxication of the senses. "I sought in my heart to indulge my flesh with wine." That תור has the meaning "to prove, to assay, to try," is certified by Numbers xiii., where the word is repeatedly used of the spies, and by ver. 18, where its force is given in the paraphrase—"and see the land, what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many." This sense of the word suits all the passages in which it occurs, and especially Numbers xv. 39—"that ye may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them; and ye shall not follow your eyes and your heart *proving*:" that is, ye shall institute no moral experiments, following the desires of your own heart and the lusts of your eyes. Such experiments will as certainly be followed by sad and painful results as it is a necessity that God's vengeance should visit those who turn aside from the way of his commands. The wise Solomon did not give himself to intoxication of the senses in the way of a mere voluptuary; for this latter cannot help doing what he does, and is a slave of his passions and desires: but in the manner of an inquirer who, standing on an eminence above sensual enjoyments wishes to know by personal trial, what can be obtained from them, so as to be able, in virtue of his own experience, to instruct others how far a true good is or is not to be found therein. In regard to בשר משך "to indulge, to cherish the body," consult Gesenius' Thesaurus. The remaining words of the verse carry out further the hint contained in the phrase "I assayed;" to the effect that Solomon did not surrender himself *à corps perdu* to

coarse sensual gratifications, in opposition to what is said of the duty of kings in Proverbs xxxi. 4-5, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." *And my heart held to wisdom, i.e.,* it took wisdom along with it into its sensual enjoyments, retained it by its side, differing thus from mere voluptuaries, who first bid farewell to wisdom, and then surrender themselves to sensual pleasures. נהג in conjunction with ב occurs only in the signification "to lead, to convey anything;" see Isaiah xi. 6, and 1 Chronicles xiii. 7, where בעגלה נהג corresponds to נהג עגלה in 2 Samuel vi. 3. Ewald's explanation, "whilst my heart was satiated with wisdom," is contrary to usage, as well as to verses 12 ff. Nor is anything contrary to the words, "I will prove thee" of ver 1, or to those of this verse, "I assayed," according to which it was a simple experiment that he was concerned with, intended to be said, which might cast a doubt on Solomon: for Solomon is introduced to notice here, not in his character of an historical personage, with which the writer has nothing to do; but as the ideal of Israelitish wisdom. "And (this took place, or I did thus, in order) to lay hold on folly," which is the antithesis to wisdom. He tried whether the true happiness of life was to be found in sensual enjoyments, in order that, supposing the contrary to be the case, he might, from his own experience, know folly to be folly, and learn to abhor it from the bottom of his heart. "Till I might see what is good for the children of men, what they shall do the number of the days of their life." By reason of the shortness of human existence, which passes very soon irrecoverably away, it is a thing of all the more importance to come early to clear ideas in regard to the end of life and the true good. To live recklessly is the greater folly, seeing that the life of man does but last some seventy years, or at the best eighty years. The point of view here taken is the right one also for all that follows. At the commencement of his experiment, which begins with wine and ends with women, the writer says, "and my heart held to wisdom," and corresponding to these words we find it said at the close, "my wisdom remained with me" (ver. 9). Everything is set before us from

the point of view of an experiment. That coarse sensual enjoyment afforded no satisfactory result; that on the contrary it manifested itself to be folly—about this not a word is wasted. There was the less need to say anything expressly, inasmuch as a general judgment had been pronounced in ver. 2, which left no doubt as to the result of such a trial.

Verses 4-8. *I made me great works, I built me houses, planted me vineyards, &c.* In 1 John ii. 16 it is said, "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world;" on which Bengel remarks, "Concupiscentia carnis dicit ea, quibus pascuntur sensus, qui appellantur fruitivi, gustus et tactus. Concupiscentia oculorum ea quibus tenentur sensus investigativi, oculus s. visus, auditus et olfactus. ἀλαζονεία est arrogans pompa, cum quis nimium sibi aut verbis aut factis assumit—ut homo velit quam plurimus esse in victu, cultu, apparatu supellectile, ædificiis, prædiis, famulitio, clientibus jumentis, muneribus." From the lust of the flesh Solomon now passes to the lust of the eye and to that pride of life which delights in, and understands how to procure for itself, outward splendour. All the modes of activity here enumerated are unable to satisfy the heart, and therefore should we be careful not to pursue them further than is necessary and indispensable—a thing which all those do who seek therein a happiness they can never confer. If we are convinced that a man may possess all these things, and yet be at the same time the most miserable of beings, we shall not occupy ourselves with them further than our rank and position in life demand. That the temple is not included amongst the "houses" is evident, not only from the word לִי "for himself," "I built houses for myself:" but also from the tone of the entire enumeration, which introduces only such things as had Solomon for their central point. In ver. 7 Solomon is represented as saying—"also I obtained cattle and sheep in multitude, more than all who were in Jerusalem before me." In this some have wrongly supposed that they had discovered "a blunder of the later author," in relation to whom there had been of course many kings in Jerusalem. Amongst the royal predecessors of Solomon in Jerusalem were reckoned not only David and Saul but also the Jebusite kings



up to Melchizedeck. "I gathered me also silver and gold and a treasure of kings and the provinces." סגלה does not signify "property in general," but "something of special value and highly estimated," strictly, "that which men lay by, lay on one side, treasure:" see *Christology*, iii. p. 635. The author is speaking here of a treasure of kings and provinces, in reference to the aforementioned "silver and gold." The conjunction therewith is the more appropriate, inasmuch as the gold and silver came from the kings and the provinces. מלכים stands without article in order to draw attention to the significance of "a treasure of *kings*:" "*the* provinces" on the other hand are the definite and well-known ones of Solomon's kingdom. Corresponding to the kings and provinces here we find in the allegorical descriptions of Proverbs xxxi. 29, "the daughters," *i.e.*, the dependent nations, "many daughters bring wealth." "The kings" are those of the vanquished heathen countries: compare 1 Kings iv. 21, "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life. Ver. 24. He had dominion over the whole land beyond the river from Thipsah and Gaza, over all kings beyond the river." There is no sufficient reason for reckoning amongst the kings the officers who, according to chap. iv. 7 ff., were appointed by Solomon over the twelve provinces into which the original Israelitish territory was divided, although some amongst them were the sons-in-law of the king. And quite as little ground is there for Hitzig's supposition, that by "the provinces" we are to understand those twelve original districts. The provinces are plainly not to be taken separately from the kings: the word *gather*, moreover, is not appropriate as applied to the original territory of the Israelites: and the twelve tribes did not bring silver and gold, but Solomon drew from them only the natural productions of the natural districts. The usual explanation of the words is, "a treasure such as kings have, and such as provinces supply." But there is no reason for resorting to this more remote view; besides that in 1 Chronicles xxix. 3, the word in the *Stat. const.* which is conjoined with סגלה designates that in which the treasure consists; "a treasure of silver and gold." *I gat me men-*

singers and women-singers, and the delights of the children of men, plenty of all sorts. תענוג "caresses" is used only of sexual love. שדה signifies in Arabic, *robur, vehementia.* From the same root is derived the Hebrew word שדי "the almighty." The adjoined plural marks the augmented force of the abstract conception: "multitude and great multitude." According to 1 Kings xi. 3, Solomon had seven hundred princesses to wife, and three hundred concubines. Those who commit the mistake of not finding in the word תענוג a reference to Solomon's love of women—a thing which it was quite impossible to pass over in silence in an enumeration of all the things with which he surrounded his own person, and which related peculiarly to himself, have sought in a great variety of ways to import into the words שדה ושדות a reference to Solomon's women. J. D. Michaelis, in justification of his arbitrary explanation, says quite openly, "in this choice of meanings I have not looked so much to philological grounds, as to the consideration that it appears almost incredible that Solomon should have forgotten women in the enumeration of his sensual pleasures." If we understand the words of Solomon's wives, the conjunction of the singular and plural will appear strange "wife and wives." That the wives are here mentioned, because they swelled by their number the splendour of Solomon's court, and set him for whom such things were prepared in a brilliant light, is plain from the verse immediately following, which lays stress on the *greatness* of the king who gathered around himself all these resources.

Ver. 9. *And I became great, and greater than all those that were before me in Jerusalem, and my wisdom remained to me:* Vulgate, perseveravit mecum. עמד is used also in Chap. viii. 3, in the same meaning of "remain, continue." Inasmuch as wisdom, that noblest of all possessions, remained to the king along with these other possessions, we should with the greater confidence expect him to have a contented and satisfied heart. The words which occur in verse 3, at the beginning of the description—"and my heart prosecuted wisdom"—correspond to those which we find here, "and (אף the emphatic "and" indicates that an important addition is being made) wisdom remained to me." Ewald's explanation is, "served me;" Elster's is, "stood to me," which is as much as to

say "it supported, aided me," in gaining riches and renown. But עמד with ל cannot have that meaning.

Ver. 10. It cost Solomon labour, yea great labour (ver. 23) to raise himself to a position where he should be the central point of all. For this trouble, however, he felt himself at first repaid by the joy which he experienced at the thought that all had been effected by his own wisdom, belonged to him and contributed to his glory. But even of this satisfaction he was speedily deprived. It only lasted so long as he did not go to the very bottom of the thing. When the joy vanished there remained only the labour behind, and this was felt to be simple torture so soon as it distinctly showed itself to be fruitless.—According to verse 11 Solomon looked upon all his works and on all the labour he had spent on them, and "behold all was vanity." The expression, "and behold," points to the unexpectedness and startling nature of the fact. The grounds of the general judgment here pronounced are afterwards detailed. Those who mistake this have recourse to conjectures. Thus Hitzig is of opinion that "the work had afforded him some gratification: but at last he had accomplished all and was unable to devise any further projects. So then the work came to an end, and with it naturally the enjoyment which it had afforded." Similarly Elster, who says: "the vanity of wearying ourselves in the pursuit of pleasure consists in this, that when the enjoyment is spent there is only the feeling of emptiness left behind." But these are the thoughts of the commentators themselves, of which there is no trace in the text. Besides, the matter in hand would not be served by any experience that might be ascribed to a hypochondriacal source: plain and palpable reasons are required, and such are advanced in the succeeding part of the book, from which the present verse may not be separated. "And there is no profit under the sun." If Solomon, with all his wisdom and with all the means at his disposal secured no profit, gained no real good, there surely must be none to be acquired, (Stier renders "profit," by "nothing abiding;" but the correctness of the common interpretation is guaranteed by verse 13: the Hebrew word only occurs in this book, and it *always* signifies "profit, advantage.") The existence of true good is by no means denied. The author treats here only of

such possessions as have their origin under the sun, and which man can acquire by his own efforts. The positive assertion correspondent to the negative one of the text is found in James i. 17—πᾶσα δόσις, ἀγαθή καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστι καταβαῖνον ἀπό τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων

In verse 12 the catchword פניתי "I turned myself," used in ver. 11 is again adopted, and for the purpose of indicating that what was there only hinted at will here be fully unfolded. Koheleth turns himself to behold wisdom and madness and folly, *i. e.* to consider them in their relation to each other, and to estimate their relative worth. Wisdom, which Solomon did not lay aside when he gave his life a new direction, but kept as his companion therein (ver. 9) applying it now to practical, as at an earlier period he had applied it to speculative matters, is here brought forward as the very soul of his undertakings. Consequently, if the inquiry into the relation between wisdom and folly show the result that wisdom is nothing, the works of which wisdom is the soul must also be nothing. At this place Hitzig makes the erroneous remark, that "after having discovered (ver. 11) that his works are nought, he finds out here that the wisdom which he has expended on them is also nought." Wisdom and the works rather constitute one whole, interpenetrating each other:—wisdom is in the works as their animating principle. Koheleth next sets before us that which gave rise to his reflections on the relation between wisdom and folly, and which caused his perplexity as to the value of the former and of the works effected by its means. This was the simple fact that his successor would probably be a man of worthless character, who would disgracefully destroy what he had accomplished by his wisdom and by his great labours. Rehoboam! that is the thought which first presses itself on his mind. Then at verse 13 begins that comprehensive discussion which in verses 18 and 19 comes back again to the circumstance here anticipatorily mentioned. The presumptive folly of his successor appears here to constitute the motive to the investigation: in verses 18 and 19, which form a sort of commentary to the somewhat enigmatical words before us, this folly seems to be an important feature in the inquiry itself. By the words—"For what is the man?" we may understand either—"what

is he? what is it with him? or, what will he do?" supplementing the meaning from what follows: "Who will come after the King," *i. e.* after me, the King, or who will succeed me in my kingdom? The miserable answer to the question, "what will my successor do?" is—He will do "what they have already done." From the fact that folly is the custom of the world, arises the probability that his successor also will be foolish, so that Solomon with all his wisdom will appear to have laboured in vain, and to have spent his strength for nothing and vanity (Isaiah xlix. 4.) Ewald's explanation, namely, "what, *i. e.*, of what kind is the man, who will succeed the king, with him, *i. e.*, as compared with him whom one has made before?" is characterised by great harshness. The simple word *with* can never stand for *compared with*: besides, Solomon was not made king by men. The inquiry into the relation between wisdom and folly, together with the results of each, to which Koheleth is moved by the thought of his evil successor which presses itself upon him, leads in the first instance to the conclusion that wisdom has an unquestionable advantage over folly, (verses 13, 14 a.) Wisdom is like light, which preserves the man that walks in it from many dangers to which the darkness exposes him: or again, the wise man is like one who sees, and who can therefore avail himself of many advantages and avoid many inconveniences.* But still the advantage is not an unmixed, an absolute one:—"but nevertheless I know that one event happeneth to them all," (14 b.) the wise man no less than the fool may break a leg, and is not less than others exposed to all possible accidents. If this be so, the question naturally arises—"why have I been then so very wise?" If wisdom with its productions has only a relative value, if it has no power to guard its possessor against even the very worst that can happen, it follows surely that a man should not occupy himself too deeply with it, that he should not make it and its creations the real aim of his life; it follows also, lastly, that an age in which wisdom flourishes less strongly, need not on that account grieve

* Seb. Schmidt,—instituitur comparatio sapientis cum homine, cui oculi non ex capite eruti sunt, sed sani et salvi adsunt, qui proinde latissime potest circumspicere, periculosa fugere, ad proficua accedere, et in omnibus provide ac circumspecte agere.

over much. *And I said in my heart that this also is vanity* —this, the study of human wisdom, in respect of which the age of Solomon far surpassed later ages. The meaning found by Elster in these words, viz., "this arrangement of life itself, according to which the wise man experiences the same fortune as the fool, is characterised as vanity," does not suit the connection. Koheleth has no wish to blame the divine government of the world, his aim is to exhibit the vanity of human efforts and human possessions. The word "for," which follows, shows that it is wisdom which he considers to be vanity. If then even this noblest of earthly possessions is vain, how urgently should we feel ourselves summoned to unite ourselves the more closely and inwardly to God: compare Proverbs iii. 5,—"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." Luther remarks—"therefore is it better to commit the supreme government of all things to the King who has made us. Let every man discharge with all diligence the duties of his office, let him accomplish whatever God gives him at the present moment to do: if all does not go on as he expected let him leave it to God. What God gives let him accept: if God hinders thee in any wise, take that also for a good. Whatever we can do we are called upon to do: what we cannot effect we must let alone: the stone which thou canst not lift thou must needs let lie." The affirmation that "this also is vanity," in proof of which it is alleged in ver. 15, to be the fact, that wisdom affords no protection against the manifold misfortunes of life, receives a new and doubly strong confirmation in ver. 16, from the forgetfulness, which in the future covers alike the wise man with his works, and the fool, and from the necessity by which both alike are bound to submit to death. If wisdom is incompetent to protect us against any of these troubles it surely should not be the object of such ardent longings. We ought rather to leave it and the pursuit thereof to Solomon and his age, and seek elsewhere the true happiness of life: "Seeing that in the days to come all is forgotten,"—Vulgate: *futura tempora oblivione cuncta pariter operient*,—"and how dieth the wise man with the fool?" That is the most unworthy and humiliating thing that can happen to the wise man, to be subjected no less than the mere fool to the disgraceful necessity of death. The

hatred of life itself, which, as we learn from ver. 17, arises within us when we consider things as they actually are and do not permit ourselves to be deceived by outward show and seeming, is by no means in itself true repentance. A clear proof thereof, is that such feelings are to be found frequently in the heart of the ungodly. They are notwithstanding for the well disposed a powerful motive to return to God. This is however not the precise point of view from which matters are examined here. The aim of all that is advanced is rather to deliver the men of that generation from their devouring yearnings after the glory of the age of Solomon by laying bare its true character before their eyes.

Ver. 18-21. In these verses attention is once more turned to the evil successor who was expected to occupy the throne. The "toil" alluded to in ver. 18 had its roots in that which such an event would bring to pass. "For" (ver. 22,) on the grounds advanced in ver. 21 and previously, inasmuch as I must leave the fruits of my labour to an unworthy successor, since furthermore accidents befal alike the wise man and the fool, since the wise man is no less mortal than the fool, and the remembrance of both alike passes away, the question presses itself on the mind—"what has *man*?" This is as much as to say, "man has nothing." On this view the word כי, at the commencement of ver. 23, appears quite appropriate. "Vexation is his torment," (ver. 23,) *i. e.*, he is tormented thereby. From which the practical conclusion is that we ought not to busy ourselves with such distracting and perplexing matters, and that it should be a cause of gladness when our circumstances furnish no occasion and incentive to such a course. In fact it promises too little fruit, nothing is obtained thereby to compensate the expenditure in labour, anxiety and pain.

Ver. 24. Seeing that such is the case with the works men undertake, our wisdom surely is to embark only in such enterprises as are clearly necessary, and in this way to employ the present moment and live for the present moment—a thing which this needy present generation is as able to do as Solomon with all his glory, (ver. 24.) Against taking this ver. as a question—"Is it not good for man?"—it has been objected that in such a case, לא would be used instead of אין. But the

cognate word אִין is used interrogatively in 1 Samuel xxi. 9. To simple eating and drinking, the contrast is given in the wearisome labours some men undergo for the special advantage of their own person, and in order to secure to it the highest enjoyments life can offer. Labours for the advancement of the kingdom of God belong to an entirely different region, and form no part whatever of the contrast which is here mentioned. The words—"let his soul see good" recommend joy in *conjunction with,* as distinguished from joy *at* our labours. Verses 2 and 3 stand in the way of an epicurean misinterpretation of what is here said in regard to eating and drinking. No one who has been at all penetrated by the deep earnestness of the book can for a moment entertain the thought of such a profane interpretation. The last words of the ver., namely—"I saw that this also comes from the hand of God"—draw attention to the consideration that even such eating and drinking, such cheerful enjoyment of the gifts of God, are not in the power of men by themselves, but must come from above, like every other good gift—*that is in fact also a gift of God.* How far this is so ver. 26 teaches us. The foe of such joy, avarice, which was one of the principal diseases of that age,—this foe can only be overcome by God. God alone can free the soul from his bonds, ver. 25. From his own experience Koheleth can say that he has richly enjoyed this gift of God. Between the enjoyment mentioned in ver. 10, and that referred to here, there is this difference, that the latter may be the portion of the man who has but small means. That חוּשׁ is used here in its usual, and alone clearly ascertained signification, "to hasten," is evident from Habakkuk i. 8, where it occurs in conjunction with "eating," and with the same meaning as here. In Psalm cxix. 60, "delay" forms the contrast to "haste." The next following words are a commentary on this verse. The avaricious man does not hasten to eat, for his eye is looking into the uncertain future, but he delays therein and stores up his pleasures against another day. מִן חוּץ are nowhere else used in the Old Testament in the sense in which they are employed here; frequently however in the Talmud and in the writings of the Rabbis. Hitzig translates —"and who can delight himself except from him?"—and remarks, "Following the Septuagint, the Syriac, Jerome and

Ewald we read ממנו. In this form (ממני) the words are plainly more suitable as a basis for the first part of ver. 24: whilst the reading ממנו corresponds admirably to the second half of the same verse." But according to the authenticated reading the words suit the whole verse: "for who has by God's gift." Independently, however, of the unwarranted alteration of the reading, it is against that explanation that חוּשׁ can only mean "to hasten," and not "to delight oneself," or as others would have it "to drink;" and further that such an expression as "eat from God," can scarcely be employed. The reason of the double future which is here used, is that the matter is still going forward.

Ver. 26. In this verse Koheleth refers back his own individual experience to a general ground. *For to the man who is good before Him giveth He wisdom and knowledge,* that his heart may not cling to the dead mammon, *and,* precisely in this way he receives also, *joy,* in that he enjoys what God has assigned him. To the sinner, on the contrary, God in his righteous judgment *giveth travail to gather and heap up!* That also is vanity and empty effort, even this gathering together; and the circumstances of the time rendered it peculiarly necessary to lay stress on the folly of such a course: the less God bestowed, the more avaricious was it deemed necessary to become. Hitzig thinks it is "the struggle to find happiness in sensual enjoyment enjoined in ver. 24." But that is too farfetched, is moreover wrong and in contradiction with the fundamental idea of the book. A discreet and solid enjoyment of that which God confers is everywhere earnestly recommended. Here we very plainly see that the refrain, "this also is vanity, &c.," by no means involves a complaint against God, but is a cry of warning to men who in the perversity of their hearts seek happiness where God has not willed that it be sought.

CHAPTER III.

In regard to the position and circumstances of the children of Israel to which this book owes its origin and character, the following data may be derived from the chapter now coming

under notice. Israel was *ecclesia pressa:* it was in a state of persecution, (ver. 15.) It was being purified in the furnace of affliction (ver. 18.) Wickedness triumphed over righteousness: on Israel lay the yoke of heathen dominion, (ver. 16, 17.) It was for the chosen people a period of death, of the rooting up of what was planted, of complaint, of silence and so forth, (ver. 1-8.) In such circumstances they harassed themselves fruitlessly by their own toilsome and anxious undertakings, (ver. 9-18.) In view of such a situation the author proceeds further in his design of conferring weapons of defence against the attacks of despair. In chapters i. and ii. he developed the thought, that on earth, the scene of vanity, men may not seek true happiness, that times which seem most fortunate and happy are not so different from wretched ones as a superficial examination might lead us to think, and finally, that all earthly happiness is but glittering misery. In the present chapter, Koheleth seeks to comfort his suffering fellow countrymen by directing their thoughts to the all-ruling providence of God. The theme of his discourse is the words of Jeremiah x. 23,—"I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. He labours to impress upon them the truth, that all prosperity and misfortune comes from God alone," and admonishes them to humble themselves beneath his mighty hand, that in his own good time he may exalt them. Everything has its season, and there is a time ordained by God, when every desire of the faithful shall be satisfied. Here then our duty is not to be careful and murmuring, and to harass ourselves, but to surrender and submit ourselves to, and patiently wait on God, (ver. 1-8.) "Nothing comes of being early and late at all my works: my care is in vain," (ver. 9, 10.) What God intends to do man cannot know, and consequently cannot conveniently order his doings: man is not set to work, but simply to wait, and meanwhile to take whatever good falls to his lot unsought, (ver. 11.) Instead therefore of being anxious and overworking ourselves, we should rather live for the present moment, cheerfully enjoy the pleasures it puts in our way, and at the same time do good, so that we may not hinder the grace of God, (ver. 12.) In conjunction with this, it is to be remarked, that the capacity of cheerful enjoyment

in life is a gift of God, who alone is able to deliver the heart from cares, (ver. 13.) Our disquietudes and griefs, and self-inflicted pains cannot alter the eternal counsels of God, (ver. 14.) Everything comes just as God foreordained it, and that is a consoling reflection for the persecuted, inasmuch as in his own good time the Lord must again undertake their cause, (ver. 15.) When wickedness has risen to power and rule on the earth, we may cherish the hope that there will be a revelation of God's judgments, (ver. 16-17.) But when God delays his judgments, it is in order that men may be purified and humbled, seeing that in such times of suffering, experience forces on them the conviction that they are as helpless as the beasts of the field, (ver. 18.) Man, who so readily puffs himself up is in one respect on a level with the cattle, in that, no less than they, he is exposed to all kinds of accidents, and must die and return to the dust, (ver. 19-20.) The difference between them, namely, that the spirit of man goes upwards to God, whilst the breath of the beast perishes with the body is one of a very subtle nature, and hard to be discerned in presence of that outward resemblance in their fates which first presses itself on the attention, (ver. 21.) To give once more the summary of the whole argument—seeing the utter uncertainty of the future, man should not trouble himself about it, —"why should I then harass myself and think about that which is to come?"—but enjoy the present, (ver. 22.)

Ver. 1. *To everything there is a season, and a time to every desire under the heaven:* Ver. 2. *A time to bear and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted:* Ver. 3. *A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up.* Ver. 4. *A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.* Ver. 5. *A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together: a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing.* Ver. 6. *A time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away.* Ver. 7. *A time to rend and a time to sew; a time to keep silence and a time to speak:* Ver. 8. *A time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace.* Ver. 9. *What profit hath he that produceth in that wherein he laboureth?* Ver. 10. *I have seen the travail which God hath given to the*

sons of men to be exercised in it. Ver. 11. *He maketh everything beautiful in his time, eternity also he hath set in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh, from the beginning to the end.* Ver. 12. *I know that there is no good in them, but that one rejoice and do good in his life.* Ver. 13. *And also every man that eats and drinks, and sees good in all his labour, that is a gift of God.* Ver. 14. *I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it and nothing can be taken from it: and God doeth it that they should fear before Him.* Ver. 15. *That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been, and God seeketh the persecuted.* Ver. 16. *And further saw I under the sun; the place of judgment, wickedness is there; the place of righteousness, the wicked is there.* Ver. 17. *I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every desire and about every work.* Ver. 18. *I said in mine heart, because of the children of men that God may purify them, and in order that they may see that in themselves they are beasts.* Ver. 19. *For accident are the children of men, and accident are the beasts, and one accident befalls them, as the one dies so dieth also the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that man hath no pre-eminence above the beast, for all is vanity.* Ver. 20. *All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.* Ver. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of the children of men, that goeth upward, and the breath of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?* Ver. 22. *And I saw that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his doing, for who shall bring him to see what shall take place after him?*

Ver. 1. *To everything there is a season:* not one that is based on a blind fate, for that would be but a miserable consolation, but one that is ordered by a God who is compassionate, gracious, long-suffering, of great love and faithfulness, who even in his anger never forgets mercy, who has thoughts of peace towards his people languishing in misery, and who, though he chastises them, never gives them over to the power of death. If things go ill all we have to do is to wait patiently for the hour of redemption, and at the end the people of God must receive that which is best for their por-

tion. Parallel with this are the words of Psalm lxxv. 3, "For I shall take a set time, then shall I judge uprightly." This set time is that which God has appointed for the accomplishment of the counsels he has decreed. Compare also Psalm cii. 14, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come." To this time appointed by God we ought to direct our eye in the midst of our afflictions. This point of time will arrive when God's visitations of His Church have reached their final termination (Isaiah x. 12). These visitations also have their season, and whoso knows this, whoso recognizes that in afflictions God's hand lies upon him, cannot surely fail to experience joy and consolation. On this passage are based the words of John vii. 30, "They sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." Gesenius' explanation: "Everything lasts but for a time, nothing is permanent," is quite incorrect. Ver. 14 is sufficient to show this. The idea is rather this, that in misfortune we must learn to wait, inasmuch as man has no power to alter the times and seasons, and can take to himself nothing which is not given him from above. "Accept cheerfully, docile child, what it pleases God to send, and though the winds blow and are so tempestuous as to threaten everything with destruction around thee, be comforted, for that which befalls thee is according to the will of God." Those also completely miss the right meaning of the words who suppose that they contain a direction to men to do whatever they have to do at the right time.* *And a time for every desire under the*

* In opposition to this view, says Rambach—"ex quibus omnibus apparet, non hic voluisse Salomonem vitæ regulas, de tempestivitate in actionibus omnibus observandas præscribere ut tamen multi censuerunt: si quidem ea hic enarrantur quæ non dependent ab hominis arbitrio et voluntate, ut nasci, mori, perdere, etc., unde hic præcepto de cauta temporis observantia nullus locus relinquitur." J. D. Michaelis says: "Unless the proposition, so variously illustrated in verses 1-8, is to be explained as if it had no connection with what precedes and follows, and were thrown out at random, it is impossible that it should be a prescription to do everything at the right time: it must rather be intended to teach that everything happens and comes at a time definitely appointed, be it prosperity or misfortune. The sense is clear from the following ninth verse, where Solomon draws from the proposition the conclusion—"What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboured?" Since God determines everything, a man's happiness will not depend on his own work, but how

heaven. It is usually assumed that חפץ is employed here in the sense of "thing, affair." Elsewhere, however, חפץ is always used to designate "favour, good pleasure." In this book also, as is universally allowed, it occurs several times in this sense (see chap. xii. 1-10, chap. v. 3); as also in the contemporaneously written book of Malachi (see chap. i. 10). Consequently if at all practicable this meaning must be retained here, as well as in ver. 17, and chap. v. 7, viii. 6; here especially, because if we accept the signification "business," we shall have a mere tautology, for there is no difference whatever between עת and זמן. This clearly ascertained meaning suits the connection also perfectly: חפץ denotes the desire which believers have to see the kingdom of God established. They thought it ought to come immediately, but they will be compelled to wait for the time which has been fixed in the counsels of God. Our wish is not fulfilled when we will, but when God wills. It is enough that it will one day be satisfied. The application of the words, "Every desire," is, of course, limited and defined by the character of the persons to whom the singer speaks. In reality he refers to the wishes of the people of God which longs for the coming of His kingdom. This limitation is absolutely necessary. Applied to the world, both the declaration here and Paul Gerhard's paraphrase of it, given below, would be utterly false.† Luther's remarks on this place are as follows—"This then is to be understood, that everything has its time and every human purpose its brief season: *i. e.*, there is a certain fixed hour for everything. As when kingdoms, lands, and principalities are to arise there is an hour for them; if they are to fall there is also an hour for that; for war and tumults there is a season: for peace

he stands with God. At all events, I am not fortunate enough to be able to find any connection between an admonition to do everything at the right time, and the words of the above-mentioned ninth verse."

† "Kommt's nicht heute wie man will
Sey man nur ein wenig still
Ist doch morgen auch ein Tag
Da die Wohlfahrt kommen mag.

Gottes zeit hält ihren Schritt
Wenn die kommt, kommt unsre Bitt,
Und die Freude reichlich mit."

also and quietude there is a season; and when the time for these things is come, no wit of man can hinder or prevent it. There was a set time for the Roman Empire and all great kingdoms to grow, and no thought of man rendered any help therein. Again, when the hour struck which was to see them decline and fall, no propping and supporting was of any use. All this is, therefore, directed against the free will of man, and against all human purposes and fancies, but especially against the notion that it is in our power to determine seasons, and hours, and persons, and measures, and place; that we can settle how the affairs of this world shall go, how its great potentates shall rise and fall, how joy and sadness, building up and pulling down, war and peace, shall succeed and take the place of each other, how they shall begin and end: it is to impress on us the fact that ere the hour arrives it is wasted effort for men to think, and their proposals are useless and vain: in fine, we are taught that nothing comes to pass before the hour fixed for it by God. His doctrine the writer confirms by examples from all branches of human experience, and says, "Building has its time and breaking down has its time," and so forth, from which he judges that all the counsels, the thoughts, the devices, and the efforts of men are but as shadows and mock-fighting, unless the thing is already determined on in Heaven. Kings, princes, and lords may take counsel and agree together upon all as they shall think fit, but whenever the hour strikes for any event whatever, it takes place and other matters remain standing and hinder each other; and although it seems as if the well planned scheme must now be executed, nothing comes of it, and nothing can come of it till the predetermined hour has struck, even if all men on earth were to put forth the most violent efforts. God will not suffer the hands of his great clock to be pointed by the kings and princes and lords of the earth: He will Himself point them: nor may we take upon ourselves to inform Him what hour has struck: 'tis He who will tell us. Wherefore also Christ said, "mine hour is not yet come." And how many stern counsels, nay, how did all the efforts of the Pharisees and chief men of the Jews remain fruitless until that hour arrived. Wherefore also Christ spake further, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow be-

cause her hour is come." Thus hath the Lord fixed a season for everything, for being rich and poor, for living and dying, and for every other phase of human experience. In reference to the words, "and a time to every desire under the Heaven," Luther remarks: "The Hebrew word Chephetz signifies that with which one is occupied, that which is the object of desire, love, purpose. Thus in Psalm i. it is said, 'those who have the desire and determination to keep God's law.' The writer includes under the term Chephetz everything which men would fain possess, to which their heart inclines, after which their yearnings go forth; and he intends to say here, because thereof they worry and afflict themselves, every man in his season: princes and lords vex themselves for great glory, power, reputation, and renown, and so forth; others for honour, possessions, luxury, and good days, and so forth. But their thoughts and cares will prove in vain, unless they hit upon the appointed hour: and even though they may be the very persons who are destined to receive all these things, still their haste and anticipatory labours are useless until God's gracious season arrives—then all is speedily effected. Therefore does it behove each of us in our several positions to do the work and discharge the office entrusted to him, to commend all his ways to God, to use cheerfully that which God bestows on him at the present moment, and to leave the arrangement of the future to His Divine Wisdom. Whoso is of the mind to act otherwise, and determines *in despectum Dei* to rush on before the appointed hour, will reap nothing but misfortune and sorrow of heart for his pains, and, let him rage and murmur as long as he will, God heeds him not." To these excellent remarks of Luther's we have only one exception to take, namely, that, as is the case also with Melancthon, too little stress is laid on the special reference to the people and kingdom of God. The general thought here expressed is further discussed in the succeeding seven verses, each of which touches upon two pairs of subjects. That the discussion contained in these verses has respect to the entire Church of God, and not merely to the experiences of individual believers, though of course bearing an analogous application to them, is evident at once from the words of ver. 2, "a time to bear," and of ver. 3, "a time to kill and a

time to heal." Such modes of activity can only be predicated, and therefore suggest the thought, of a great whole; and besides, the highly important words in Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, "See now that I even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand," render it easy to conceive that by this great whole is meant the people of God. That national events are alluded to is implied also in the words, "Cast away stones, and gather stones together." Further, a guide to the just understanding of the whole is furnished by the concluding verse, the 8th, "A time for war and a time for peace." The parallel passages moreover involve this reference to the nation; a view which, according to the testimony of Jerome, is exceedingly ancient.*

Ver. 2. *There is a time to bear and a time to die.* The mistake with respect to the national reference of this passage led to the adoption of the meaning—"to be born," Vulgate, *nascendi*. The infinitive of ילד occurs no fewer than twenty-four times, and always in the signification of "to bear," never in that of "to be born." An example of this is Genesis xxv. 24—"and her days were full ללדת to bear," not, "to be born:" another is found in Isaiah xxvi. 17, "Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery." עת לדת is "time of bearing, of delivery," in Genesis xxxviii. 27, in Job xxxix. 2: Compare also Luke i. 17; τῇ δὲ Ελισάβετ ἐπλήσθη ὁ χρόνος τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτήν. In fact no instance whatever can be adduced in which the Active Infinitive stands for the Passive. In Proverbs xii. 7, to which Gesenius appeals, הפך signifies "they destroy," in xv. 22, הפר signifies "they bring to nought." The people of God personified as a woman is not unfrequently said to "travail and bear," when in times of prosperity it grows and waxes strong, and the number of its members becomes greater. Thus for example in Isaiah liv. 1, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child, for more are the

* Hebræi omne hoc quod de contrarietate temporum scriptum est, usque ad illum locum in quo ait: tempus belli et tempus pacis, super Israel intelligunt. Explaining their meaning Jerome says—Tempus fuit generandi et plantandi Israelem, tempus moriendi et ducendi in captivitatem. Tempus occidendi eos in Ægypto et tempus de Ægypto liberandi.

children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." See also Isaiah lxvi. 7, "Before she travailed, she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a manchild:" verse 8, "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her sons." If our explanation of the words is correct, the reference to them which John xvi. 21 unmistakeably bears, becomes perfectly clear. There the hour approaches for the woman who is to bear, and she is the image of the Church. In the main this is for her a time of gladness. The momentary pain which forms necessarily a point of transition therein, is a feature added by the Saviour.—In contradistinction to *bearing* stands *dying*. Both however are in like manner under the superintendence of holy love. Both come from our faithful heavenly Father, who has thoughts of peace towards His people, who chastises them even unto death, but never gives them over into the hands of death. A very extensive use is made of death in the Old Testament as the symbol of the severe afflictions of the people of God. "My God and mine Holy One," cries Israel in Habakkuk i. 12, "let us not die." In Psalm lxxxv. 7, it is said—"Wilt thou not revive us again, and shall not thy people rejoice in thee?" —In Psalm lxxi. 20, "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt return and quicken us again:"—In Hosea vi. 2, "After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him." We find the most detailed employment of death to describe the degeneracy of the Church and of resurrection to express its restoration in Ezekiel xxxvii. The chief passage however is Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, "I kill and I make alive." Compare besides Psalm xlviii. 15, lxviii. 21, lxxx. 19. Israel was in a state of death when the author wrote. If it recognised God's hand working in this death it must prove an easy matter for it to rise to the hope of that life which the same God had promised in His word, and which stands ever at the termination of God's dealings with His people. Moreover death, although in itself bitter, becomes sweet to the man who is thoroughly penetrated by the conviction that he is in God's hands, and is drinking from God's cup. Luther says—"To believers and Christians all this is very consolatory; for they know that no tyrant's sword can kill or destroy them, and that before their hour

comes no creature whatever can harm them. Hence they do not trouble and worry themselves much about death, but when it comes they die unto the will of God as he pleases, like lambs and young children."—*A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.* In this respect also the people of God experience change according to the holy purposes of their Lord, who sends them at one time the undeserved grace of prosperity, and at another time, as punishment merited by their ingratitude, he inflicts upon them the loss of everything. When these troubles befal us we must not murmur nor despair, but humble ourselves under the strong hand, repent and hope. Even to feel the angry hand of God upon us is a sweet comfort. Compare Psalm xliv. 3, where, in regard to the period under Joshua so rich in signs of grace, it is said: "Thou hast with thy hand driven out the heathen and planted them;" also Psalm lxxx. 9, "thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt: thou didst cast out the heathen and didst plant it." Compare further also what is written in Psalm lxxx. 13, 14, in reference to the plucking up of what was planted, which was effected by the power of this world, into whose hands degenerate Israel had been given over for punishment: "Why hast thou then broken down her walls so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it."

Ver. 3. *A time to kill and a time to heal.* Here also again the principal passage is Deuteronomy xxxii. 39: "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal." On it are based both the present words and those of Hosea vi. 1: "Up and let us return to the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal; he smites and he will bind us up." To the הרג of this place corresponds there the "tearing and smiting." הרג "to murder" is predicated of God in relation to His people in Psalm lxxviii. 31, 34: "When he slew them, then they sought him and they returned and inquired after him," (compare Jeremiah xii. 3, vii. 34, xix. 6.) The state of the people must have been desperately bad, if God, who in his treatment of them is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great kindness, finds himself compelled to resort to such terrible means. Still, destruction is never the end of the ways of God with His

people. Only as a passage to life, does he ordain death. In regard to the "healing" compare besides Exodus xv. 26, where the Lord describes himself as Israel's physician, (compare Isaiah vi. 10.)—*A time to break down and a time to build up.* פרץ signifies not "to destroy," but "to pull down." It is used especially of pulling down protecting walls and hedges. Compare Isaiah v. 5, where the Lord says in reference to the vineyard of Israel: "Break down its hedges and he will tread it down;"—Psalm lxxxix. 4, "Thou tearest down all its hedges," (compare lxxx. 13.) In chap. x. 4 the phrase is found in completeness. Nehemiah speaks in chap. ii. 13 of his book, of the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, פרוצים, and of its gates which were burned by fire, in consequence of the destruction by the Chaldeans: further in 2 Kings xiv. 13, it is said, "and he brake down of the wall of Jerusalem four hundred cubits" (compare besides Nehemiah iv. 1). This tearing down and building up may take place, in an outward manner, as it did at the time of the occupation of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and after the return from the captivity, or it may take place *spiritually*, through the entrance of the Church on times of great degeneracy, and the restoration and elevation thereof to prosperity. Thus in Jeremiah xlii. 10, where we read—"if ye will settle again in this land, then will I build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up,"—*persons* are the object of the building up and pulling down, which terms must therefore be understood figuratively, as Michaelis takes them, *longœvitate, liberis, opibus omnibusque bonis vos aucturus.* The same thing is true also of Jeremiah xxiv. 6, "and I bring them again to this land; and I will build them and I will not pull them down; and I will plant them and not pluck them up:" and of chap. xxxi. 4, "Again I will build thee and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel." The second clause of Psalm li. 18—"do good in thy good pleasure unto Sion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem," is explained by the first:—God builds the walls of Zion in that he furthers its well-being. The mere fact that it was composed by David forbids us taking the external view. In a material sense, the walls of Jerusalem were not destroyed in the days of David. In the same way are we to understand Psalm cii. 14, 15: "thou shalt arise

and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and they grieve over its dust." Under the image of a building in ruins is brought before us the Church of God in its reduced condition. Consequently the time for pulling down is always present when God abandons his Church to inimical powers. Such a time of pulling down, for example, was that of the dominion of Rationalism. But the men whose hearts bleed during such a period should never forget that above and behind the destructive forces stands the Lord, and that in the long run his counsels, and his alone, shall be accomplished. After a manner very similar to that of this book are the diverse modes of God's action contrasted in Jeremiah i. 10. The prophet was commissioned on God's behalf to "destroy, to throw down, to build, and to plant." In Jeremiah xviii. 7-9, it is said in regard to Israel—"suddenly I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And suddenly I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant." The people of God has this privilege, however, that God always pulls down and destroys as a means and preparation for building, and that to this latter as a final aim the divine purposes are directed.* Hence in the kingdom of God it is possible to be joyous and contented, even when, for the moment, the season of pulling down is present. Up to this point commencement was made with the redemptive and beneficent aspect of human and divine activity: here it forms the conclusion. That the author intentionally makes it form the commencement and the close of the whole, is unmistakeable. It began with "bearing," and it ends with "peace." If then beginning is good, and end is good, we may reasonably be less anxious and careful about that which meanwhile befals us, and may look with a calm and cheerful mind on the changes now taking place around us.

* Jerome: "Non possumus ædificare bona nisi prius destruxerimus mala. Idcirco sic Jeremiæ verbum a deo datum est, ut ante eradicaret et suffoderet et perderet; et postea ædificaret atque plantaret."

Ver. 4. *A time to weep and a time to laugh.* There are seasons when those who belong to the kingdom of God must weep, because the Lord hides his face from the house of Israel, (Isaiah viii. 17,) and there are also times when they can rejoice. Joy always comes last. For this reason the weeping of the children of God is quite different from that of the world. It always has a background of hope. Theirs is not the anguish of despair; it is a sadness which takes comfort. Our Lord alludes to this passage when He says in Luke vi. 21, μακάριοι οἱ κλαίοντες νῦν ὅτι γελάσετε. In close connection also with this passage stands John xvi. 20: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι κλαύσετε καὶ θρηνήσετε ὑμεῖς, ὁ δὲ κόσμος χαρήσετε, ὑμεῖς δὲ λυπηθήσεσθε, ἀλλ' ἡ λύπη ὑμῶν εἰς χαρὰν γενήσεται. When it is the time for weeping it is useless to try and force ourselves to laughter, as is the fashion of the world, which seeks to forget and gild over its misery until at last it falls a victim to despair. Our course should be that which is enjoined on us in 1 Peter v. 6, ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ: Bengel—*in tempore opportuno,* when the season for laughter has arrived. This season however we may not endeavour to anticipate: our moods of feelings should go hand in hand with the various phases of divine providence: we should act in short like the children of Israel, who once in the days of their captivity hung their harps on the willows and refused to sing the songs of Zion. *A time to mourn and a time to dance.* On these words it is remarked in the Berleburger Bible—"If any man at another time is visited by still severer misfortunes, then weeping will not suffice, but wailing must be added thereto, that is, a great and public mourning must take place in that we wring our hands above our heads and express our lamentation in the gestures and attitude of sorrow."

Ver. 5. *A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together.* What the Lord says in Mark xiii. 2, βλέπεις ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομάς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ λίθος ἐπὶ λίθῳ ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ, holds good of the Church in all its periods of degeneracy. When the Church ceases to be the true house of God, the time for the scattering of its stones is not far off. With the scattering, however, the gathering always goes hand in hand. At the time when the old Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, there rose up in its stead the glorious edifice of the

temple of the Christian Church. Previously God scattered stones by the hands of the Chaldeans: through his servant Cyrus he gathered them together.—*A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.* There is a season when the Lord embraces his people, and a season when he does not permit them the enjoyment of his love, but repels them from his presence. When He treats us in the latter way we should revolve in our hearts the words of Psalm xlii.: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God;" and we should beg and pray and acknowledge and express our sins until He becomes once more gracious. The expression "embrace" takes its rise in the "Song of Solomon," chap. ii. 6, where the bride, which is Zion, says—"His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." That elsewhere also in Solomon's writings this transference of embracing to spiritual relations occurs, as for example in Proverbs iv. 8; v. 20, I have shown in my Commentary on that passage. The name Habakkuk is probably derived from the "Song of Solomon." It signifies "hearty embrace," and is used to describe the tender relation of love in which Israel and the Prophet, who is the nation's representative, stand to the Lord: as in fact Isaiah styles the Lord in chap v., דודו and ידידו. As to substance, Jeremiah xiii. offers a parallel: for there, in consideration of the close and living relation which subsists between them, Israel appears under the image of a girdle which the Lord lays around Him, and which He puts off in the time of His anger, only however to put it on again, when the season of wrath has passed away.

Ver. 6. *A time to seek and a time to lose.* At one period the Lord interests Himself tenderly in His people: at another He lets them go to ruin, yet in such a manner, that in the midst of wrath He remembers mercy. "To seek" is generally predicated of believers who seek the Lord: but God also is said to "seek" when His retributive righteousness comes into play (Joshua xxii. 23), and when in love He shows compassion: "God seeks the persecuted" (ver. 15). With the word לאבד Jarchi compares Leviticus xxvi. 38, "and ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up." *A time to keep and a time to cast away.* Now, the Lord protects and preserves His people as a precious jewel:

then He casts it from Him as a despicable and hateful thing. Usually God's casting away signifies banishment from His presence. Thus in 2 Kings xiii. 23, it is written in respect of the ten tribes, "and the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, and *cast them not from his presence.*" Michaelis: *ut postea factum est* (xvii. 18-20), also in Jeremiah vii. 15, where the Lord says to Judah, "and *I cast you from my presence,* as I cast out all your brethren, the whole tribe of Ephraim." In Psalm lxxi. 9, also, where Israel, now growing old, cries, "*cast me not off* in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth:" and in Psalm cii. 11, as here, the word השליך is employed alone. Deuteronomy xxix. 27, furnishes an example of the use of the verb in regard to God, who in his anger casts out his people into a strange land.

Ver. 7. *A time to rend, and a time to sew.* There is a time when the people of God must mourn, and again a time when they can rejoice. קרע is used with special reference to the rending of the clothes, which in Israel was a sign of mourning. When it is said in Genesis xxxvii. 34, "and Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days," we recognize in Jacob a type of the people of God and of the Church in all ages, a prophecy in the form of a fact which is being fulfilled ever afresh. Where there is the like cause, there is the like result. Was it necessary that the ancestor should be visited with severe afflictions on account of his sinfulness, for the same reason must his descendants also suffer, and to preserve their heart from exalting itself God ordains that through much tribulation they shall enter his kingdom, that times of refreshing from His presence shall alternate with times of sorrow, and His unchangeable love disguises itself in many ways and frequently appears under forms fitted to awaken terror. In Joshua vii. 6 we read, "and Joshua rent his clothes, he and the elders of Israel:" and in 2 Samuel xiii. 31, "and the king arose and rent his clothes and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent." *A time to keep silence and a time to speak.* There are times when silence

must be observed, as Jacob was compelled to keep silence when he heard how Sichem had defiled Dinah his daughter, until his sons arrived (Genesis xxxiv. 5): and then again come times when we may speak and stand up boldly in the presence of the enemies of God's people, as when the Lord spake to Paul in the vision by night, when the Jews of Corinth tried to force him to silence—"Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace," (Acts xviii. 9.) When the hour appointed by God arrives, the words of Psalm cxxvii. 5, "they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate," come fully true. Till then we must cover our faces and keep silence. But it is notwithstanding a blessed silence, for it is attended by the conviction that a time to speak will inevitably come again.

Ver. 8. *A time to love and a time to hate.* There is a time when the Lord causes the world to incline in love towards His people: and again a time when He gives them over to the world's hatred. In respect to the latter, and in connection with the period of Israel's residence in Egypt, it is said in Psalm cv. 25, "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants." In regard to the former compare Exodus xi. 3, where the Lord is represented as having given the people such favour in the sight of the Egyptians, that they offered them gifts; also Psalm cvi. 46, where concerning the Asiatic oppressors of the nation, it is declared that "he made them to be pitied also of all those that carried them captives," (compare 1 Kings viii. 50); further, Daniel i. 9, "and God brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the Eunuchs;" and lastly, 2 Kings xxv. 27, according to which the Lord moved the heart of Evilmerodach to compassion towards Jehoiachin. The time at which this book was written might in the main be characterised as one of "hating," as the faithful were compelled to acknowledge by the painful experience of every day: but the word of God was pledged that a "time of love" should arrive, such as had never previously been witnessed, and in the hope of this, they found it easier to accept temporary hatred from the same kind hand, that would one day bestow upon them love. The era was before the door, of which Isaiah prophesied when he wrote, "and kings shall

be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers," (chap. xlix. 23), and "thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings" (chap. lx. 16), and thus saith the Lord; behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like an overflowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees." Though Zion was still "deserted and hated" (Isaiah lx. 15), it had no need to be very much concerned on that account. Here also we may apply the saying, "At the end comes the best." *A time of war and a time of peace.* The sweet name of peace, which is an object of such deep affection to the heart of the struggling Church, forms the conclusion to the whole. "Peace, peace, to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord." (Isaiah lvii. 19.)

Ver. 9. *What profit hath he that produceth in that wherein he laboureth?* The conclusion which follows from the preceding reflections is here drawn. Inasmuch as there is a time for everything, it follows that "all our toils, early and late, are for nought, all our care is in vain." The Berleburger Bible remarks, "for he can neither pass beyond nor alter the fixed limits set by divine providence, so as, for example, to be joyful when the hour for mourning is come." All care and labour, all our exhausting efforts apart from God, (Cartwright. *deo non aspirante, a quo rerum omnium effectio suspensa tenetur,*) are pronounced fruitless. In this, however, are not included the "doing good," (ver. 12,) and "unwearied scattering of seed," (chap. xi. 6,) with which we must go forward because of God's command, on whose will it depends whether it prove a blessing or not: much less is there any reference to the prayers of believers, which in fact are as strongly called for and enjoined, as our own anxieties and labours are forbidden and excluded, by the word "there is a time for everything." Nay, it is even possible that prayer, if earnest, may alter the aspect of the times. If there is really a time for everything, then surely when things press us down as a leaden weight, we should lift up heart and hands to Him who can change the times and seasons.* Luther renders the words—

* "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen seyn
Und wissen nicht wo aus noch ein,

"what can a man do more, let him work as he will?" and remarks on them—"it is just this, that till the hour arrives all our thought and labour are lost. Notwithstanding we must all work, each man in his office, and use diligence, for God commands this. If we hit the right moment, then the business succeeds: if we do not, nothing comes of it, and no device of man can be of the least use."

Ver. 10. I *have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.* The travail does not perhaps consist so much in the occupation of contemplating and inquiring into the government of the world, as, according to ver. 9, in the useless anxieties and exhaustive labours to which men subject themselves in that they desire, and yet are unable to effect anything, because everything comes to pass as it has been fixed and predetermined by God. On this Luther observes: "they who wish to anticipate God's appointed hour, weary themselves in vain, and reap only anxiety and trouble of heart." The faith which looks upward to God and leaves all to Him, which says: "why should I then distress myself? Heart, why art thou cast down? Why dost thou trouble and pain thyself? Trust in God thy Lord who made all things!" delivers us from this torment. But in this life even faith is liable to become weary and to change, and no sooner does the believer begin to be negligent therein, than he receives his share of the travail to which all the children of men are condemned, in a word, he begins to exhaust himself with cares and toils. And in truth, it is good for him to have his share thereof. The travail is a wholesome discipline. By such means the children of men are constrained to humble themselves, and to feel their own insufficiency. Care and toil begin, when faith

> Und finden weder Hülf noch Rath
> Ob wir gleich sorgen früh und spat:
> So ist das unser Trost allein
> Dass wir Zusammen insgemein
> Dich aurufen O treuer Gott
> Um Rettung aus der Angst und Noth."

Compare also the remarks of Cartwright—"Non equidem ut abjecto laborandi studio desidiæ et ignaviæ se dedat: sed ne ita consilio et labori confidat, ut Dei opem et benedictionem precibus impetrandam neglectui habeat. Qui ut tempora et temporum momenta in sua manu et potestate comprehensa habet, ita illa precibus suorum flexus, eorundem commodo dispensat."

and prayer cease: but out of care and toil we rise again to faith and prayer. When the heart is emphatically broken by the sore travail to which God subjects the children of men, it obeys the injunction—"O troubled soul, betake thyself to God."

Ver. 11. *He maketh everything beautiful in his time, eternity also he hath set in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.* The principal thought of the verse is contained in the last words: "man cannot find out the work of God from beginning to end;" which some interpret to mean—"man cannot perfectly comprehend God's doings;" but which may be more appropriately explained—"To man the knowledge of the future is altogether denied;"—as Luther has it—"neither beginning nor end." Inasmuch as, apart from revelations concerning the future which God communicates to his servants the prophets (Amos iii. 7), man, as such, is and will remain destitute of this knowledge, to the end that he may learn to humble himself before God, it is impossible for him to order his doings with judgment, and he is consequently directed in all cases to trust not in himself but in God. The following remarks are found in the Berleburger Bible: "The conclusion which Solomon wishes to draw is, that no man can so order and arrange his affairs for the future as that he shall be thoroughly happy in this world, but must leave them to time and destiny; and should he seek by his own energies to secure to himself the object of his desires, his efforts will be useless, and at the end there will be still no other course open to him than to commend himself and his affairs to the fatherly care of God." A twofold subsidiary thought precedes this main idea of the passage. The first is—"He maketh everything beautiful in his time." That God's rule is one with a fixed aim and method is here expressly mentioned, in order to remove as far away as possible the notion of an almighty arbitrary ruler—a notion which might easily take its rise in the fact that the method of divine government is so concealed from our eyes that we cannot tell beforehand what He will do. According to the accents יפה is connected with בעתו. J. D. Michaelis remarks—"The words 'beautiful in his time,' according to the accentuation, are closely connected together. And, in view of that which goes before, what other

meaning can be attached to them, than the following?—among the things mentioned in verses 2-8, there are, it is true, many that are unpleasant and evil, but at the time when God sends them they are not only good but even right beautiful." These things which in and for themselves are evil, must consequently occur in such a connection that they shall further the good purposes of God. Only at the fit season are they beautiful, and then they form an indispensable link in the chain of this world's events. Accordingly, that is not a bad saying of Raschi, that "at a good season to reward good works is beautiful: and at an evil season to punish evil works is also beautiful." The second accessory thought is contained in the words—"Eternity also hath he set in their heart." In the verse considered as an organic whole this thought occupies the following position:—God makes everything beautiful in his time, but man is unable to see it notwithstanding that God hath set eternity in his heart. מבלי is to be taken in its usual signification of "without" (which occurs moreover oftener than the Lexicons allow), "without that not finds,"* which is as much as to say, with this exception or with the exception, that not finds* how such knowledge of the future doings of God seems notwithstanding to follow from the fact that in the heart of man, and specially in the heart of his own people, He hath set eternity; for apparently this latter gift stands to the former in the relation of the particular to the general. If God's nature is accessible to man, surely, one would think, God's doings will not remain hidden from him, especially as they follow a fixed plan. The commentary to the words, "and he set eternity in their heart," (Rambach: *notitiam dei aeterni*), is furnished by Psalm xc. 1-5, where the fleeting character of our earthly life is contrasted with the eternity of God: compare especially ver. 2—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." And then we must compare also Romans i. 20—*τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι νοούμενα καθορᾶται ἥτε ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης.* According to the Apostle's words, man has an intellectual intuition of God's eternal power and Godhead, or as it is here expressed, of the eternity which is manifested and

* I have rendered the German literally *ohne dass nicht findet*.—Tr.

developed in the words of creation. So far as man springs from God, his eternity is inseparably bound up with that of God (chap. xii. 7). It is man's highest privilege to discern something eternal behind the transitory objects of the present world, and to be able to cling closely to this eternal substance. And inasmuch as this eternity of God is set in his heart, it would appear reasonable to expect that the knowledge of the doings of God in time should be attainable by him. But at this point man stumbles all at once upon bars and bolts, and finds that God has reserved something for himself alone. Many interpreters explain עולם by "world;" others by "philosophy," or by "worldly mind." But usage is against this. עולם is never used in the entire Old Testament in any other sense than of "unmeasured time," and of "eternity:" and in this book above all is it employed in the signification "eternity," (see chap. i. 4, ii. 16, iii. 14, ix. 6, xii. 5; "long time," chap. i. 10). There is also the additional objection that this explanation of the term gives no appropriate sense. The words, "except that, &c." would then be unsuitable. For the setting of the world in the heart of man, does not render it in any way probable that he will be able to command a knowledge of the ways of God: it may easily, however, and with justice, be regarded as something exceptional, and so to speak abnormal, that man, in whom there dwells the knowledge of the divine nature, should be refused the knowledge of the divine works.—In reference to the main idea of the verse, Luther observes, "Man cannot hit upon the work, which God does; that is, no man can know beforehand the hour which is ordained above; and however much he may plague himself, he can never know when it will begin or come to an end.—It behoves us therefore to say, O Lord, to thee belongs the supreme direction, in thine hand it rests entirely, to order and settle everything in the future: under thy control is my life and my death; as I need my life, so long thou givest it and not a moment longer. And inasmuch as in respect of them, no care and thought is of any use, I will act thus in regard to other gifts, using them as they come; care and anxiety I will cast to the winds, and commit the rest to thee."

Ver. 12. *I know that there is no good in them, but that one rejoice and do good in his life.* Seeing that man is not the

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lord of his own destiny, it follows that his best course is to let God act and arrange, and, in place of caring for the future, to enjoy the present, instead of labouring and scheming with a mind ever restless and ever looking for results, to do quietly what is given him to do.* The Hebrew words which we have rendered "in (or with) them," that is "men," (בני אדם of ver. 10), are rendered by several commentators, most recently by Stier—"therein, *in illis rebus omnibus.*" But that the former is the correct explanation is evident from chap. ii. 24, באדם אין טוב, and from chap. viii. 15, "it is not good" לאדם, where for the ב, in this passage, ל is employed. Joy forms the contrast to restless care and useless worry: compare Matthew vi. 34: *μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσετε εἰς τὴν αὔριον· ἡ γὰρ αὔριον μεριμνήσει τὰ ἑαυτῆς. ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς·* Luther observes: "this is all the better understood from what goes before: he means to say, that because so many hindrances and mishaps in their business befal even those who are industrious and who wish to act well and truly, and because there is so much misfortune in the world, there is nothing better than cheerfully to use what God puts into our hands at the present moment, and not vex and distress ourselves with questions and cares about the future." Not to be careful, but to dare to trust in the Almighty, and consequently to be able to rejoice, is a precious privilege bestowed by God on the children of men (Psalm xxxvi. 8), of which they should take care not to rob themselves by their own wickedness. Doing good should go hand in hand with a cheerful and thankful enjoyment of the blessings which the moment brings, in order that thus we may run in the way commanded by God, may preserve a good conscience, which is the necessary condition of all joy, and not shut but rather open the entrance for God's goodness and grace. To the "do good" of this verse, corresponds the "fear God and keep his commands" of chap. xii. 13. Following Luther's example, several adopt the explanation, "Do good, act kindly, to thyself." Usage however decides against this view: and, in opposition to usage, such supposed parallel pas-

* Rambach remarks: "Cum itaque tanta sit rerum humanarum vanitas, tanta hominis circa eas impotentia, ut hactenus ostensum, inde ego certum exploratumque habeo, etc."

sages as chap. ii. 24, iii. 22, v. 17, 18, are adduced to no purpose. Compare Psalm xxxiv. 15: "cease from evil and do good: seek peace and pursue it;" Psalm xxxvii. 3, "Trust in the Lord and do good;" and Isaiah xxxviii. 3, where Hezekiah says—"I have done that which is good in thine eyes."

Ver. 13. *And every man that eats and drinks and sees good in all his labour, that is a gift of God.* The word גַּם refers to the whole sentence. Not only is it a gift of God that any man's sufferings are averted, but also that, despite suffering, whether present or threatened, he should be cheerful. It is in the power of God alone alike to bring us happiness and to quiet the heart and free it from cares. Our heart is as little in our own power as is our destiny.* The capability of enjoying divine blessings is called in chap. ii. 24-26, a gift of God, because the heart of the natural man is in bondage to avarice: here the same thing is affirmed on the ground that it is bound by care with such bonds as human strength can never loosen. After the words just quoted Luther remarks further: "but that is just the art to be acquired: that we are able to do it at all is the gift of God. I myself, says Solomon, can teach and tell this to others, but I can give it neither to myself nor to others: the heart capable of doing this, God alone can bestow. Solomon thus teaches us, firstly, what we shall do, and secondly, where we are to get the ability to be thus minded and thus to act: that is, he teaches us, that we with our own thoughts, anxieties and cares, can make nothing better or other than it is: our part is to pray with all earnestness, and call upon God that He may deliver us from sadness and useless cares, and give us a calm and believing heart."

Ver. 14. *I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it and nothing can be taken from it; and God doeth it that they should fear before Him.* No one can frustrate his plans: no one can hinder their fulfilment. Wherefore, "it behoves thee to trust the Lord, if it shall go well with thee. With care, dejection and self-inflicted

* Cartwright says: "Quod non ita intelligi velim, acsi suo aut merito aut arbitrio hoc illis obveniret; quando quidem quisquis est, qui edendo et bibendo ex labore suo commode vivit, illud ipsum (quantulumcunque hominibus videatur) dei est gratuitum bonum.

pains thou canst gain nought from God ;—he must be sought unto." Compare Isaiah xlvi. 10, where God says—" my counsel shall stand fast, and all my will, will I accomplish :" Psalm xxxiii. 11, " The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations :" and further, Psalm cxxvii,—" it is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow ; thus giveth He it to His beloved in sleep." In face of the eternal decrees of God, it is to no purpose that we resolve to carry any undertaking through : our part is to cast ourselves as a child into our Father's arms, and entreat Him to have pity on us. Of God's counsels, however, it is not true to say with the poet, that, " Bound by the brazen laws of eternity, men accomplish the cycles of their existence." God's counsels are undoubtedly unalterable from without ; no creature, let him commence as he will, can effect an encroachment upon them : but they do not stand above God himself as a foreign power, as a kind of fate ; so that it is not our prayers, but our own workings that are useless. " And God doeth it that they should fear before Him." Driven by sheer necessity, and feeling their absolute weakness, they cry out, in the words of Psalm cxxiii. 1-2, " unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look unto the Lord God until that he have mercy upon us." Luther's remarks on this subject are : " But why does God afflict men with such countless, varied, and great cares of government, of household, of trade, of business, compelling them to run and race, and ride and drive, and travel by land and water, and often to risk their lives, whilst He has kept in His own hands the right moment when any thing shall take place, and all the rest is in vain ? The answer is : in order that men may fear Him, that they might keep his first commandment, that He may remain Lord and God, and that all may recognise Him to be God : further, that we may all learn thorough and hearty obedience and humility, and begin nothing trusting to our own wisdom, thoughts, abilities ; as St Paul admonishes the Romans in chap. ix. 16, saying,—" it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God, who sheweth mercy." Whoever believeth that the

aforementioned things are not in his own power, will not undertake anything on his own responsibility, will not worry and vex himself too much, but let God rule in all things: what God gives, he uses, what God withholds he dispenses with; if God takes aught away he endures it patiently. In this way God maintains fully His own divine honour, and at the same time restrains us from arrogance, inasmuch as no man then can say—I am king, prince, lord, manager, governor, learned or otherwise, but must always confess that God also is Lord. That is the true fear of God, that is the highest, holiest and most suitable service of God, the service to which Solomon, David, and all the prophets earnestly summon men, namely to believe and be certain that God sees all our doings, and works all in all, (Ephesians i. 11.)

Ver. 15. *That which hath been is now and that which is to be hath already been, and God seeketh the persecuted.* The commentary to these words is furnished by the parallel passages: Psalm cxxxix. 16: "Thine eyes did see me when I was yet imperfect, and in thy book were they all written, the days which should yet be, and none of them was there;" on which I have remarked in my *Commentary to the Book of Psalms,* "if our whole existence from beginning to end is pre-ordained by God, how is it possible that anything should ever befal us, with which His hand was not concerned, which He did not see, and which in His own good time He did not help on? A further illustrative passage is Job xiv. 5, "His days are determined, the number of his months with thee." What was (or became) is already, existed already in the divine counsels before it was openly manifested, and hence we learn, that God's decrees decide everything, that in all the circumstances and ways of life we should look up to God, and that we may not look to our fellowmen, who are the companions of our weakness, and who, however much they may puff themselves, and however great pretensions they may make, are, in truth, but instruments in the hand of providence. The word *is* refers us to the *timeless,* the eternal nature of that which God pre-ordains,—which timeless element is able to represent itself in the form of the present. Knobel's explanation, "it is already, *i. e.,* it is now," is inadmissible, for the simple reason that כבר cannot possibly mean

"already." The third member of the sentence, "and God seeks the persecuted," falls into harmony with the other two, so soon as it is perceived that the reference they contain to the divine preordination is intended as a consolation: "Nothing can happen to us which He has not sent, and which will not conduce to our blessedness." Of the accuracy of the translation given of the third clause of the sentence there can be no doubt.* Just in the same way is seeking ascribed in ver. 6 to God, who takes compassion on his forlorn and wretched children. In the only place where it occurs besides here, namely, in Lamentations v. 5, the Niphal form of רדף has the signification "be persecuted." The people of God there give utterance to the complaint נרדפנו, "we are persecuted," and the Niphal form in itself would scarcely allow of being otherwise interpreted. This explanation is further confirmed by verses 16-17, where we find exactly the same thought. To those verses this 15th verse forms a link of transition. Following the Vulgate (*Deus instaurat quod abiit*) most modern interpreters assume that נרדף signifies "the past," and that the idea is, "the phenomena and events of life keep repeating themselves in a fixed circle." This idea, however, would do violence to the whole connection, and besides, that נרדף cannot signify "the past," is as certain as that רדף means "to persecute" and nothing else. Following the correct view, the Berleburger Bible remarks: "Therefore thou shouldst not so take offence thereat as to allow thyself on its account to be drawn away from the highest good. For God will not leave unpunished the injustice and the violence which are done to those that fear Him." We have in this passage the Old Testament basis for the words of our Lord in Matthew v. 10.: *μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.*

Verses 16-17. These two verses comfort the people of God whilst groaning beneath the unrighteous oppression of worldly

* It may be found even in the Septuagint, which has rightly conveyed the meaning of this verse, so often misunderstood by more recent interpreters: *τὸ γενόμενον ἤδη ἐστὶ καὶ ὅσα τοῦ γίνεσθαι ἤδη γέγονε, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ζητήσει τὸν διωκόμενον*: the same may be said also of the Syriac and of the Targum, Deus requiret obscurum et pauperem de manibus improbi, qui persecutus fuerit eum.

powers by pointing them to the divine judgments which are shortly to be executed. Ver. 16. *And further saw I under the sun.* In the previous ver. allusion is made to the overthrow of the people of God and the triumph of the world: here to the misapplication of authority to purposes of tyranny and oppression. *The place of judgment, wickedness is there:* the seat of judgment is the place whence, by divine appointment and legal sanction, justice should be administered, for Rulers and Judges govern and give sentence in God's stead (2 Chronicles xix. 6-7). שמה signifies always "thither," never "there:" wickedness moves thitherwards, takes possession of the place. The wickedness is that of the heathen authorities. Parallel to this is Psalm xciv. 20, where, in view of the deluge of Chaldeans which overwhelmed the people of God, they ask—"Is the throne of iniquity in fellowship with thee, which frameth misery by a law?"—misery, which is the result of violence and wickedness. In Psalm cxxv., which like the present book was composed during the time of the Persian dominion, it is said (verses 2-3): "The mountains are round about Jerusalem, and the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity." From beneath the yoke of their heathen oppressors will the people of God once again rise to the glorious liberty of children. *The place of righteousness, the wicked is there.* In Daniel iv. 27, Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar—"break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor." *The righteous and the wicked God will judge,* (ver. 17). Here the righteous man is Israel: the wicked is the Heathen: and the ungodly in Israel as being degenerate are left unnoticed. By destiny, and at the core, Israel is the nation of the upright, Numbers xxiii. 10. In Habakkuk i. 13, it is written in reference to the Chaldean catastrophe: "wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth him that is more righteous than he?" *i. e.*, him that stands opposed to the evil one, as being righteous. On this passage compare Delitzsch, who considers the merely relative view of righteousness untenable. The judgment of the wicked may be looked for with the greater confi-

dence, when they are found occupying the seat of law and justice, thence practising wickedness, and misusing their authority for injustice. The tribunal of justice is of God (Deuteronomy i. 17); whoever appears there appears before God (Exodus xxi. 6, xxii. 7-8.) For this reason it is impossible that God should leave unpunished the misuse of authority: a thought which is further carried out in Psalm lxxxii. Our duty is to wait patiently for this judgment of God's. The more shamelessly and wantonly their heathen rulers abuse their authority, the more certain may we be that it will come, and the more cheerfully may we wait. In 2 Thessalonians i. 5, Paul describes the persecutions and oppressions of believers as an ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, "a notice, a proof, that God will shortly interpose."—*For there is a time there for every desire and about every work*, with God, Psalm lviii. 12: "and man says, Verily, the righteous has a reward: verily, God judgeth on the earth." Koheleth points as it were with lifted finger away from the earth, the seat of unrighteousness, to heaven. "There" is employed in the same way in Genesis xi., ix. 24.

Ver. 18. The introductory words, "I said in mine heart," set this verse on the same footing as ver. 17, and show that the question raised in ver. 16, is here examined from another point of view. The problem is this—How is the singular fact of the prosperity of wickedness to be explained and justified? The first answer is given in ver. 17, and the consideration is brought forward, that this prosperity is only temporal, and that by God's judgments the disturbed order will in due time be established. But this by itself is not fully satisfactory. There is the further and more difficult task of showing why the righteous, why God's own people, are visited with temporal misfortune. This is done here. The cross of the righteous is disguised mercy. It serves to purify them: specially does it help to purge them altogether from pride, and to lead them to humility. *Because of the children of men*, do these things happen: for their sake does wickedness sit in the seat of judgment, and the wicked one in the place of righteousness. Koheleth speaks of the "children of men" in general, but has specially in view the children of Israel. We find a case exactly similar to this in Psalm xxxvi. 7-8. This designation is chosen because it expresses human *baseness*, the consciousness

of which, according to the close of the verse, is intended to be awakened by the cross. Knobel's explanation is as follows—"I thought in my mind on the relation of the children of men." But על דברת occurs in this book as well as in the Chaldee portion of the Book Daniel, only in the sense of "Because of, on account of;" and then further the accents are decisive against this view.* The general and vague expression —"for the sake of the children of men," is more precisely defined to mean—"in order to purify them;" and then amongst the evils from which they are to be purged, special mention is made of *pride.* ברר signifies properly "to separate," (Ezekiel xx. 38,) and then "to purify." It occurs in a sense precisely correspondent to that of this passage in Daniel xi. 35—"and some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge and to make them white for the time of the end." ברר stands there between צרף and לבן "to make white, to make clear." The "time of the end," is the period when these visitations of God shall terminate. That such an end must of necessity come, is here taken for granted, in agreement with ver. 17. The process of purification is only a temporary one. ברר is employed also in Daniel xii. 10, "many shall be purified and made white and tried:"—Ch. B. Michaelis—*per tyrannicas illas afflictiones ex divina sapientia et directione a vitiis suis purgabuntur et a maculis albabuntur et velut metalla excoquentur multi, scil. intelligentes quod sequitur.* Hitzig is disposed to give ברר here the meaning of "try," but entirely without grounds that will bear investigation, and contrary to the remarkable agreement between this verse and the parallel passage in Daniel. בור in chap. ix. 1, is not to be brought into comparison. It is rather a cognate of the word באר. *And in order that they may see that in themselves they are beasts.* That is the result to be gained by the purification. Substantially parallel is Job xxxvi. 8, 9, where it is said concerning the sufferings of the righteous—"and if they be bound in fetters and be holden in cords of affliction; then he showeth them their works, and their transgression that they have

* Rambach: qui cum consequentibus connectunt habent accentus faventes, secundum quos verba priora: dixi in corde meo, per majorem interstinctionem a seqq. separata, *signum* dicti, reliqua vero dictum ipsum continent.

become proud." Among the stains from which we are to be cleansed by means of the cross, pride is the worst. לִרְאוֹת is not so much "that he may see," as "that they may see," being convinced by facts, by stern and terrible realities. Here it is not as in Psalm lxxii. 22, the *behaviour* of beasts that is referred to, but their fate, that which happens to them, just as in Habakkuk i. 14, where the community of the Lord complains —"thou makest men like the fishes of the sea, like the beasts, that have no ruler over them." Catastrophes in which men are treated as beasts, are well fitted to teach them their nothingness. Through the fall man received the disposition and feelings of an animal. In righteous retribution, therefore, and to cure him of the pride which occasioned his fall, the fate of mere animals befals him, and he is subjected to death like the beasts. But not content even with this, God allows catastrophes to befal His people from time to time, which bring men into still closer relation to the beasts. הֵמָּה stands for the *verb. subst.* "are." לָהֶם, "in themselves," apart from God's protecting care, and when He does not extend to them his helping hand; which is as much as to say, that they themselves are as powerless to aid and protect themselves, as are the unreasoning beasts. When they see this, a thing which their pride causes them constantly to forget again, they turn to God saying—"Asshur shall not save us: we will not ride on horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, our God! for in thee the fatherless find mercy. Then comes forth the divine answer: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely," (ver. 5 ff.) For, as he goes on in verse 19 to say, such is actually the state of the case: as a part of mere nature, in contrast to God, and apart from the bond uniting him with his creator, from that which becomes his through the life in God, who by breathing into him His Spirit raised him above the beasts of the field, (see Gen. ii. 7,) —man, godless man, is in truth no better than the cattle. מִקְרֶה being in the *stat. absol.* can only be translated—"for haphazard are the children of men, and haphazard are the cattle," which is as much as to say that the children of men are no less haphazard than the cattle. Men themselves are designated *chance*, because they stand under the dominion of chance, of casualty. Chance or haphazard is opposed to the

free determination of one's own fate. Their lot is irresistibly determined and fixed *from without.* מקרה, "occurrence," from קרה "to occur," in 1 Samuel vi. 9, is set in contrast or opposition to that which arises out of the determined decree of the God of Israel: in the present passage, on the contrary, it forms the contrast to that which is the effect of the free self-determination of man. It is used in a similar manner in 1 Samuel xx. 26, (viz. of pollution in accordance with Deuteron. xxiii. 11;) and in a strikingly similar way in Ruth ii. 3, where, in regard to the most important event in the life of Ruth, which must certainly be looked upon as under the special leading of God, it is said—"and there happened to her an occurrence," that is, it happened accidentally. In that place also מקרה designates "haphazard, chance" in one particular aspect thereof. Similar also is Luke x. 31: *κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἱερεύς*, and so forth. "Accident," there, is put in contrast to the intention or purpose of the priest himself. The words—"and one accident or chance befalleth them," *i. e.*, they are both under the rule of the same chance, serve to explain the somewhat obscure expression—"they *are* chance." Hitzig observes: "the author means, and, as we learn from what follows immediately after, can only mean, the same final fate, namely, death." But the relation of this to what follows is rather that of the general to the particular. The general is, that men, no less than the cattle, are subjected to a foreign power; the special or particular is, that they must die. מקרה is employed of fates in general in chap. ii. 15 also; there is nothing to justify limitation of its application. *And one breath have they all.* רוח signifies here "the breath of life," as in chap. viii. 8, and in Psalm civ. 29, where we read, "thou gatherest together their breath, they depart and return to their dust." See also Genesis vii. 21, 22. "And all flesh died that moves upon the earth, both fowl and cattle and wild beasts,——and all men. All, in whose nostrils was the breath of the Spirit of life, died." The flood, that type of all other judgments, was a sublime confirmation of the indisputable truth here expressed. Then were the "heroes," "the men of name," compelled to experience that everything on earth has the same breath. "No pre-eminence has man above the beast," that is, of course, in those aspects which have already been brought under notice. That Ko-

heleth had not the remotest intention of setting man in general on a level with the brute creation is evident, both from ver. 11, where he makes man's exalted pre-eminence to consist in the eternity which God hath put in his heart, and further, from the entire relation in which Koheleth stood to the faith of Israel, of which faith, the likeness of man to God was so important an element. Luther says—"Why are we then proud and arrogant, we, who are no more certain of the hour of our death than the beasts or the cattle?"—The foundation of *verse* 20 is Gen. iii. 19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." That is a truth which man is led ever afresh by his pride to forget. *All go unto one place:* in Job xxx. 23, Sheol is designated "the assembly house for all living," *i. e.* for all living *men*. Of that however the writer is not speaking here, but, as Hitzig remarks, "of the place whither the body comes (all was formed from the dust, and all returns to the dust). Beasts (Genesis ii. 19, i. 24) as well as men (Genesis ii. 7) are originally born of dust, and return to the dust. (Psalm civ. 29, Genesis iii. 19, Psalm cxlvi. 4). This holds good of the body in both spheres."—Ver. 21. In this verse Koheleth goes on further to say, that man has notwithstanding a great and glorious superiority over the beasts, in that, when his body crumbles to dust, the spirit returns to God who gave it (xii. 7); whereas the soul of the beast perishes with the body. This pre-eminence is, however, hard to be perceived; it is concealed beneath that which we have in common with the beasts; and the fact, that his pre-eminence is thus hidden, ought in itself to be sufficient to lead man to humility and extinguish in him all proud thoughts. *Who knoweth the spirit of the children of men that goeth upward?* Precisely as in Psalm xc. 11 (compare Isaiah liii. 1), the words מי יודע direct attention to the difficulty of discerning this superiority, which does not lie on the surface: whereas, on the contrary, the resemblance man bears to the beasts forces itself on our notice. העלה is the participle with the article, which here, on account of the guttural that follows, is pointed with Kametz, instead of with Patach and a following Dagesh, as in the corresponding word היורדת. The participle

with the article is often employed for the *verb finit.* with a relative: as for example "the ascending one," instead of, "he who ascends," (see Ewald, § 335). In regard to the word הוא Ewald's remarks, § 314, hold good: he says—"the most delicate manner of giving prominence to a person is by means of the pronoun הוא, αὐτός, Latin *ipse;* a person is thus specially referred back to, and distinguished from others. As הוא adds only a freer kind of accessory distinction, it stands without article after the particular noun." This consideration does away altogether with the objection urged by J. D. Michaelis, that: "According to the grammar, another ה would be required before הוא, in case it should be said that הוא is added by way of emphasis, and that the translation may run as follows, quis novit spiritum hominis ascendentem *illum?*" Compare, for example, Numbers xviii. 23; הלוי הוא, "he, the Levite." The foundation of the characteristic of man here brought into prominence is contained in Genesis ii. 7—"He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." If the spirit of man is a breath from God, it cannot perish with the body, but, when the dust returns to the dust, must return to Him who gave it. That which belongs to the earth is given back to the earth; and so that which belongs to heaven must be rendered back to heaven. *And the breath of the beast, that goeth downward to the earth.* This is in itself easy to be known. The sense however here is the following—"Who knows both,—the immortal soul of man, and the perishable soul of the beast, in their difference from each other?" The Septuagint, Chaldee, and Syriac, take the ה in העלה and in היורדת to be interrogative, rendering the words—"Who knows whether the spirit of the children of men goeth upward, and whether the breath of the beast goeth downward?" and this interpretation, the rationalistic exegesis has adopted. From the point of view offered by this translation Knobel remarks—"Koheleth shews an acquaintance with the dogma of the immortality of the soul, but he throws doubt on it, in order not to invalidate the view expressed in verses 19, 20. Had he believed in a going upward of the soul to God, he would have contradicted himself." But the contradiction here affirmed exists only in appearance. Verses 19 and 20 speak only of the physical, bodily nature of man. The fact that as to his body man is under the same

necessity of dying as the beasts, should suffice to humble him, and to make clear the folly of arrogance. Against this view of ה as used interrogatively the following reasons may be urged: I. According to the points ה can only be the article, and cannot be the interrogative particle, (compare Ewald, § 104): and this ground, by itself, is sufficient. That the present pointing, which rests on the authority of tradition, is incompatible with the interrogative view, is frankly conceded by Ewald: "In chap. iii. 21," says he, "the Masorah has twice changed the interrogative הֲ into the article—manifestly, because it deemed the question objectionable." If the vowels of the Old Testament were really the work of narrow minds, whose judgment was guided only by what the exegesis seemed *to them* to require, the vocalization would present a very different appearance. II. This interrogative view, wrung from the text by the alteration, involves the author in a glaring contradiction with himself. That which he is here said to call in question and deny, he distinctly avows his belief of in chap. xii. 7. It is the more difficult to allow the existence of such a glaring contradiction, as elsewhere the writer is always self-consistent, never following the suggestions of the moment, but everywhere setting before his readers fixed and clearly defined teachings. The words of chap. ix. 10 also,—"the Sheol whither thou goest,"—are decisive against the supposition that Koheleth sets the soul of man on an equality with that of the beast which goeth downward to the earth, that is, which perishes along with the body. III. The interrogative view, further, involves the author in a contradiction with the original records of the Jewish religion, the possibility of which no one will allow who has entered into the spirit of the book, and the presence of which would make the admission of the book into the Canon an insoluble problem. To co-ordinate the soul of man and the soul of the beast is manifestly to contradict the Thorah, which was the standard of all thinking in Israel; "In the Pentateuch man is exalted to a very high position. He is created last of all and is set at the head of creation. Everything else exists for his sake. According to Genesis i. 26, 27, he is created in the image of God, namely, so that the whole divine glory shines forth from him in a reduced measure. According to Genesis ii. 7, two elements are

united in man, an earthly and a divine, which latter no other creature shares with him.—We have here the anthropological basis of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. As in the earthly element of man's nature, there lies not only the possibility, but even, so far as it is not penetrated, pervaded and glorified by the spirit, the necessity of death: so in the fact that man shares the divine image, participates in the life which comes from God, there is involved the possibility, yea, the necessity, not only of immortality in general, but of an immortality of blessedness or misery, of eternal life or damnation. The soul which bears the divine image, is, as such, removed not only from the sphere of the perishable, but also from the ranks of those creatures which merely exist or vegetate." Beitr. 3 s. 570. Throughout the entire Old Testament this all-important distinction between the soul of man and the soul of the beast is firmly maintained; so that this passage would occupy quite an isolated position. Everywhere, at all events, we find the doctrine of the Sheol.

Ver. 22. Here the practical conclusion is drawn not only from ver. 21, but from the whole chapter. Such a close was the more necessary because verses 19-21 are pretty far removed from the main thought,—so far removed indeed that they might form a parenthesis. Man, this is the thought, is not master of the future: therefore he must rejoice in the present. The same practical conclusion had been already drawn in ver. 12. To that our attention is here again directed. *And I saw that nothing is better* (טוב מן "better," chap. iv. 3, 1 Samuel i. 8), *than that a man should rejoice in his own works*, in the works themselves, and in that which is produced and effected by their means, so that he has his portion from them (chap. v. 18). *For who shall bring him to see what shall take place after him?* "After him," that is, not after his death, but after the condition in which he now finds himself. Jerome says: Pro eo quod nos posuimus: ut videat id quod futurum est post ipsum, apertius interpretatus est Symmachus dicens: ut videat ea quæ futura sunt post hæc. In the parallel passage, chap. vi. 12, it is said, "What will happen after him *under the sun*." According to this, those general events are referred to, which exercise a decisive influence on his fate. It is not, therefore, permissible to ex-

plain the words to mean—"what will become of him,"—as those are compelled to do who suppose that a conclusion is being drawn from the verse immediately preceding. This supposition is based moreover on a false interpretation of ver. 21, where immortality is not denied but affirmed (Knobel: "one must enjoy before death in order not to go away empty.") If ver. 21 has been rightly explained, this present verse would not form at all a suitable conclusion from it alone. Man knows not what God will do to him (ver. 11). Therefore is it foolish to give ourselves up to wearisome exertions in pursuit of happiness, to distress ourselves with cares (verses 9, 10); and quite as foolish is it to enter upon many distracting schemes and occupations, to hunt after the πλούτου ἀδηλότης (1 Timothy vi. 17), to gather together and to heap up for him on whom it shall please God to bestow it (chap. ii. 26); wise, on the contrary, is it, to rejoice in the present.

CHAPTER IV.

The link of connection between the different parts of this chapter is the common reference to the misery under whose yoke the people lay groaning.

According to verses 1-3 the earth is not a place where righteousness dwells, but a scene of injustice and violence. This was a knowledge at which the Church of God arrived with peculiar ease, and which was impressed on it with peculiar force, at the time when it was itself under the tyrannical rule of worldly power. The chapter now under notice suggests that the book was composed during that period. Some have, in this connection also, spoken of the "bitterness of Koheleth's view of the world," and have found in these verses the "expression of the complaints of a bitter and desperate spirit." But this is quite incorrect. Koheleth does not *complain:* he considers ("I saw all the oppressed"), and simply sets before us, *facts.* To know and present these in their naked truth is a privilege of the wisdom which dwells in the midst of the people of God; whilst on the contrary the world is compelled in many cases to close its eye against them and to surrender itself to illusions, unless it be prepared to become

the prey of despair. The wretched state of things here depicted could only justify complaints against God if there had been no fall, if man were still in the condition in which he was when he came forth from the creative hand of God. Since the day spoken of in Genesis iii. the best world is that of which it has been said, "The world is but a vale of tears, and everywhere need, trouble, fears." Such a state of things, however, can only breed despair in the minds of those who have fixed their eyes on the earth, and who, by their own guilty conduct, have sealed up the fountains of consolation, to which the writer directed attention in chap. iii., and to which he will again point in the following chapters. From these fountains our misfortunes and troubles should drive us to draw.

Ver. 1. *And I returned and considered all the oppressed that are made under the sun, and behold there the tears of the oppressed, and they have not a comforter, and, in the hand of their oppressors, power, and they have no comforter.* Ver. 2. *And I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.* Ver. 3. *And more than both, him that hath not yet been, that hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.*

Ver. 1. That שוב is not to be taken in the sense of "to turn oneself," but in that of "to return," is clear from the parallel passage, Zechariah v. 1, "And I *returned* and lifted up mine eyes and behold a flying roll:" as compared with Zech. iv. 1: "and the angel that talked with me *came again* (returned) and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." It might be supposed that the words—"I returned and saw," —indicate that the present subject had been already brought under consideration; (compare chap. iii. 16 f.) The words however rather imply that the author's meditations are taking a new turn, as is clear not only from Zechariah v. 1, but also from the parallel passage, chap. ix. 11, where the phrase—"I returned and saw,"—manifestly introduces a new thought. In ver. 7 also, the expression—"I returned and saw,"—indicates that the meditation which had been interrupted is taken up again, and is turned to a new subject. שבתי points out in general, that a train of thought is taken up again after a pause during which it had been dropped: Vulgate, "verti me

ad alia." And then the fresh subject is described. *All oppressed who are made.* That the author, in referring to the oppressed, had especially in view the people of Israel which was trodden under the foot of the powers of this world, is clear from chap. iii., but especially from Jeremiah l. 33,—"thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the children of Israel and the children of Juda are *oppressed* together, and all that took them captives held them fast and would not let them go." עשוקים never signifies "oppression," always "oppressed." The עשוקים of Amos iii. 9, stand to the עֲשֻׁקוֹת of chap. iv. 1, evidently in the relation of *patiens* to *agens*. The עשקים of the former passage are the דלים and the אביונים of the latter. Job xxxv. 9 is to be explained—"by reason of the multitude of the oppressed they cry:" that is, complaint is raised that there are on earth so many who are unrighteously oppressed. There is the more reason for retaining this meaning in this clause, as the word is undeniably employed in a like sense immediately afterwards in the course of the same verse. נעשים suits this meaning very well. The oppressed are *made* such by their oppressors.

Ver. 2. On this verse Luther remarks—"when one attentively regards the innumerable sorrows of the heart, miseries, great evils and troubles on earth, and the awful wickedness there is in the world which is the devil's kingdom, one must surely be of the mind that it were better to be dead than to see so much wretchedness." The thought expressed in this verse occurs also frequently under Christianity, notwithstanding the abundant sources of consolation opened to us by its doctrines and promises. There are seasons in the life of nations, and of individuals when this thought presses itself on the mind with peculiar force. It has full truth, though of course of a one-sided character. In view of the severe sufferings to which our life is exposed, it can scarcely appear, considered in reference to that which is usually described as the happiness of life, to be a desirable good. In this aspect of the matter the dead are more to be envied than the living. In other aspects, however, life appears as a high and noble possession. And even in the general human aspect that saying holds true, "a living dog is better than a dead lion," (chap. ix. 4,) and that other one,—"Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing is it for the eyes to see the sun," (chap. xi. 7.) On the believer, moreover, as he walks

in the darkness of this earthly life, there shines a bright light, (Job. xxxv. 10,) so that he can say—"my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion for ever," (Psalm lxxii. 26:) he takes delight in fearing God and keeping His commands, (chap. xii. 13;) he is able, with a heart that rests and is satisfied in God, to enjoy the blessings which the present never fails to offer even when public affairs are in the most wretched condition; he hopes in the retributive righteousness of God which will bring the perversions and wickedness of the world to an end, (chap. iii. 16;) and, finally, in the momentary perversion of justice he recognises a wholesome means of divine chastisement, (chap. iii. 18.) שבה is the *infin. absol.* which with an emphatic brevity, appropriate to the excitement here felt, is employed for the *verb finit.* (compare chap. ix. 11; Ewald 351c.) It is not the Particip. in Piel with rejected מ,—an aphaeresis which scarcely occurs in the Piel form,—for קשבה in Nehemiah i. 6-11, is an adjective, feminine of קַשָּׁב, and there is no ground for regarding מהר in Zephaniah i. 14, as a participle, since it is often used as an infinitive with the signification "hastily." That כבר does not mean "long ago," but "already," and serves to define the preterite more strictly, is very clear in this passage. It forms the contrast to עדנה, contracted from עד הנה, "still."

Ver. 3. With increased force of expression the author here says that it is better not to have been born at all than to live. Parallel with this is the passage (chap. iii.) where Job, who had no peace nor repose, and who was disturbed ever afresh, wishes for himself the lot of "an hidden untimely birth," and curses the day of his birth, or where in verse 20 of the same chapter he asks—"Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul?" So also when Jeremiah in chap. xx. curses the day of his birth, and in ver. 18 complains, "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" In regard to such expressions, however, we must remark that so far as they occur in Scripture they contain only one side of the truth. In proof of which the same Jeremiah, in a passage immediately preceding the one just quoted, says: "Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord, for he delivers the soul of the needy from the hand of the

evil doers." Such a feeling of human misery is not only natural, but is intended by God who brings us into circumstances which call it forth. By thoroughly disgusting us with the world, and by making us realize its absolute vanity, God means to draw us to himself. Only in this way can Jahveh, the true and absolute Being, become to us what he really is. Through much tribulation must our hold on earthly things be loosened and ourselves enter into the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER IV. 4-6.

The emptiness of earthly happiness betrays itself clearly in the fact that it is accompanied by envy (ver. 4): "when any man has good fortune and good days, then envy is sure to rave and rage." We must not, however, suffer this sad experience to mislead us into inactivity (ver. 5). Still, in view of such a fact, we shall do well not to mix ourselves up too much with distracting affairs, and, on the contrary, rejoicing when they are not forced upon us, (like Israel at that time), be content with a humble lot in life (ver. 6).

Ver. 4. *And I considered all travail and all skill of work, that this is the envy of a man from his neighbour: this also is vanity and empty effort.* Ver. 5. *The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh.* Ver. 6. *Better is one hand full of rest, than both fists full of travail and empty effort.*

Ver. 4. The word כישרון, which occurs only in Koheleth, is rendered by the LXX. here and in chap. ii. 21 by ἀνδρεία, virtus. Derived from כשר, "rectus fuit," it is used partly of "skill, ability in action," and partly of the "fortunate results" thereof. In the latter signification, namely, "advantage, gain," it occurs in chap. v. 10; in the former we find it used in chap. ii. 21, in conjunction with wisdom and knowledge: "a man whose work is in wisdom and knowledge and Kishron (כישרון). There follow after, the words: "and to a man who has not laboured therein must he give it." According to the contrast here drawn כשרון must refer to the labour, the activity itself, and not to the result. The matter of complaint is that the skill developed in labour has no higher pre-

rogative. כשרון is employed in the sense of "skill, ability," here also.—*That this is the envy of a man from his neighbour* :—the end of the whole matter is that a man is envied by his neighbour ; Vulgate, "eum patere invidiæ proximi." Following the example of the Decalogue מרעהו draws attention to the baseness of the fact that the friend, of God and right, grudges him the successful results of his skilful labour. It is of course better to be envied than pitied, but still envy with all the hostile and pernicious acts flowing therefrom, and which frequently bring about the ruin of their object, is a great evil, and it is no small consolation for a man who, like Israel at the time, finds himself in an unenviable position, to know that he is not exposed to this torment. Several interpreters think that here all distinctions are traced back to the principle of rivalry. That would be an incorrect thought : whereas it is a demonstrated truth that "men envy the happy." In Isaiah xi. 13, קנאת אפרים is the jealousy felt by Ephraim of Judah, who was preferred : in chap. ix. 6, of this book, envy is conjoined with hatred. The verb also is frequently used to denote envy or jealousy of advantages. It is hard that a man's zeal should be interpreted by his neighbour to be an envious desire to surpass, to outstrip him. Then further, the connection with verses 5, 6 is decisive against this view. "Vanity and empty effort" are not usually predicated of labours which are morally worthless, but of such as bring no advantage (compare chap. ii. 17). Ver. 5. In order to avoid envy we may not throw ourselves into the arms of inactivity. The only effect of that would be to ruin ourselves. To lay or fold the hands together is a gesture of laziness. To devour one's own flesh is to work one's own ruin (compare Isaiah xlix. 26). The principal passage is Proverbs vi. 9-11 : "How long wilt thou lie, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

Ver. 6. Men are warned, however, by the bitter experience mentioned in ver. 4, to do well, and not to go beyond that which is strictly necessary. Taught by such an experience they will be satisfied with a humble and limited lot. עמל and רעות רוח point back to ver. 4. "Both fists full of, etc," is as

much as "both fists *full of good*," which more carefully looked into, is after all only travail and empty effort. Israel then had the hand full of rest: the heathen power, both fists full of travail. To make Israel content with its lot by laying bare the vanity of that which it was destitute of, but which the world possessed, is the usually misunderstood main drift of verses 4-6.

CHAPTER IV. 7-12.

How little the life of a man depends on many possessions, the author shows in a picturesque description of the example of a rich man who has so completely isolated himself by his selfishness and avarice, that he stands alone and deserted, without enjoyment and without protection in life.

The author repeatedly recurs to the subject of avarice and earnestly combats it. We may conclude therefore that it was one of the principal diseases of the time. It comes before us as such, also, in the other literary monuments of that period. "Ye run every man to his own house," says Haggai in chap. i. 9. Malachi complains in chap. i. that the worst offerings are presented to the Lord, and in chap. iii. 7-12, of dishonesty in the bringing of tithes and offerings. Nehemiah, also, according to chap. v., was compelled to resort to stringent measures against the usurous practices then in vogue. The temptation to avarice lay in the unsatisfactory nature of the general circumstances, which exposed men to the danger of centering all their interest in their own private affairs: but then also further in the distress of the times, and in the exactions of the heathen authorities by which they were misled into clinging the more tenaciously to that which they already possessed.

The description has however two sides. It is directed not only against avarice, but also at the same time against envy of the riches of the world, of their heathen tyrants. One ought not to vex oneself about "a handful of vanity;" one should not allow oneself to be beguiled into discontent with the leadings of divine providence, into murmurings against God, for such a cause. The aim both of the preceding and following observations is to lead Israel to a just estimate of

that which the heathen possessed, and which they themselves lacked; and taking both together, we may say that the passage has a predominant reference to that side of the description last mentioned. Ver. 1-3 exhibits the misery of the covenant people: ver. 4-16 opens up points of view from which their condition appears in a more favourable light.

Ver. 7. *And I returned and saw vanity under the sun.* Ver. 8. *There is one and not a second, he hath neither son nor brother, and there is no end of all his labour, his eyes also are not satisfied with riches, and for whom do I weary myself and bereave my soul of good? This also is vanity and a sore plague.* Ver. 9. *Better the two than the one, because they have a good reward in their labour.* Ver. 10. *For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow, and woe to him, the one, who falleth and hath not a second to help him up.* Ver. 11. *Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?* Ver. 12. *And if he prevail against him, the one, two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

Ver. 7. The words—"I returned and saw vanity,"—indicate that a new species of vanity is now brought under consideration.—How far the possession of earthly wealth is from being in itself a good, the author shows in ver. 8 ff, by sketching before us in a picturesque manner a scene from life which illustrates this truth in a most palpable manner. It is an entire mistake to assume, as Rambach and others do, that the author's controversy is with celibacy, or with the "fuga vitæ sociæ." Luther's remarks are substantially accurate; "Greedy bellies are to be found yet, who hunt after money and property night and day and still do not want it." Ver. 9. *There is one and not a second, he hath neither son nor brother.* The *second* here mentioned is different from the son and from the brother. According to what follows there is one whom he might have, but has not through his own guilt. He has isolated himself by his own selfish avarice, has driven all companions away, and stands alone in the world. The words, "he hath neither son nor brother," are meant to bring clearly to light, on the one hand, the folly of blind passion—he stands alone in the world, has no one to care for, and consequently has no apparent reason for his avarice—and on the other hand

the wretchedness of his position. He ought the more eagerly to seek to make to himself friends, seeing that he has no relatives of his own.

Ver. 9. The *two* in this verse form a contrast to the one *without* second in ver. 8. Wherein the reward consists is detailed in ver. 10 ff. They afford each other protection and help, and mutually render life agreeable. The isolated man on the contrary must work in vain, since he is destitute of enjoyment in life, and without protection in danger.

Ver. 10. When they fall, that is, either the one or the other. אי, "woe," occurs only here and in chap. x. 16; the cognate word הי in Ezekiel ii. 10: Elsewhere אוי and הוי are employed.

Ver. 11. Several commentators fancy that they find here a reference to the wife: but inappropriately. A wife the rich miser might have, and be a prey to the feeling of desertion which invariably accompanies an avaricious and selfish disposition. It is sure to have its revenge. Lovelessness always finds its echo.

Ver. 12. The subject alluded to here is the enemy which must be supplied from the tone and circumstances of what is said, (Ewald § 294 b.) תקף always means "to prevail against, to overpower," never "to attack:" compare the adjective תקיף "powerful" in chap. vi. 10. "Him, the one," is as much as to say, him, in his isolation, or because of his isolation. The image of a "threefold cord,"—in making a firm, strong cord, three threads were usually used,—is the more appropriate here, as the number *two* in general only represents plurality. The author must not be considered as arguing from the point of view of mere prudence. The moral abominableness of isolating selfishness and heartless mammon worship are brought clearly to light by the unhappy positions in which they set men.

CHAPTER IV., 13-16.

In the preceding part of the chapter, the writer has laid bare the vanity of possessions; now he proceeds to show the vanity of rulers, in order to console his fellow country-

men in bondage, who could not forget their own loss of dominion.

Ver. 10. *Better is a youth, poor and wise, than an old and foolish king, who knoweth no more to be admonished.* Ver. 14. *For out of prison he cometh to reign, whereas impoverished is he that was born in the kingdom.* Ver. 15. *I saw all the living which walk under the sun, with the youth that stands in his stead.* Ver. 16. *There is no end to all the people, to all whom he precedes. Nevertheless those who came after him shall not rejoice in him. For this also is vanity and empty effort.*

"Ah! how vain and fleeting are the honours of men! To-day we are compelled courteously to kiss the hand of the man whom to-morrow we tread under our feet in the grave." An illustration of these words is given here in the portrait drawn of the old king who is displaced by another; and then in that of the upstart who is first extolled and courted, and at last loses the favour which exalted him to the throne. At his ascension, millions of voices cried, "Long live the King;" words which contain the "Percat" of him who is deposed. But the scales are again turned. He becomes in the end as unpopular as his predecessor. "This rounded earth can afford no rest, for what it at one moment raises up, at the next it casts down." Because of the loss of such vanity we ought not to fall into inconsolable sadness. Every attempt at an historical exposition of this section is useless. That which appears to imply such a reference, is but minute and special portraiture, and not otherwise to be judged: it is like the picture given from life in ver. 8, where the general thought is not barely advanced, but clothed with flesh and blood.

Ver. 13. "*Better* is a youth," not in a moral point of view, but because, notwithstanding his temporarily low position, he gains the kingdom which the other loses, and so is better off, So also מובים in ver. 9, טוב in ver. 3.

Ver. 14. The first half of ver. 14, gives the reason of the expression "better:"—"For out of prison he cometh to reign,"—namely, "that youth." That הסורים is a contraction of האסרים, (Ewald § 86 b.) is plain from Judges xvi. 21: "and he, (Samson) groaned בבית אסירים (ver. 25:) also Genesis xxxix. 20, where בית הסהר is explained by—"the place where the

king's prisoners were bound." The author appears to have borrowed this feature, that the youth rises to power out of prison, from the history of Joseph; only, however, this one feature, for as to the other circumstances there is no resemblance. *Whereas impoverished is he that was born in his kingdom.* The abasement of the governing king is the condition of the rise of the youth. This sentence thus assigns the motive for that which is advanced in the preceding one. The catchword is למלך. The Hebrew word rendered "whereas, although" means literally "also:" it is used however in the sense given. See Proverbs xiv. 20, Ewald § 362 b. *Born in his kingdom: i. e.,* one who came to the possession of the kingdom, of his dignity as ruler, by birth: like the kings of the Philistines, who being hereditary, bore the title Abimelech, that is, king's father, and might therefore quite as well have been styled king's sons. רש is not a participle, but the preterite from רוש, and contains an allusion to Psalm xxxiv. 11: "lions are impoverished and suffer hunger." It is evident from the whole connection that in רש the old king is to be taken as the subject. Symmachus rightly expresses this: *ὁ δὲ ἐαίπερ βασιλεὺς γεννηθεὶς ἠπορήθη.*

Ver. 15. This verse, according to which "all the living which walk under the sun" fall to the share of the upstart, shows that the circumstances on which the description is founded, are not those of any petty state, but of the great universal monarchies of Asia, which took particular pleasure in identifying themselves with the entire orbis terrarum. Compare Daniel iv., where the tree, which signifies the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, stands "in the midst of the earth," and spreads itself out "to the end of all the earth," "all flesh" was nourished from it, and where Daniel in giving to Nebuchadnezzar the explanation of the vision says—"thy dominion reacheth to the end of the earth."

Ver. 16. *All whom he precedes*, that is, all who do homage to him as their monarch (Micah ii. 13). The word גם here corresponds to גם in ver. 14, and directs attention to an addition of a singular kind, which falls quite as much to the lot of the second king as the first. Whether the change is brought about by the fault of the king, who was not able to bear his good fortune, and failed to display the wisdom in his

conduct as actual ruler, which he showed in the *attainment* of power; or whether by the changeableness of the people we are not told, and simply because it did not lie within the aim of the author to speak of the causes, but only of the fact, of the change itself. Luther observes: "and so we find in histories that at first many rejoiced and hoped in Nero, and looked for a fine able ruler in him. The first five years of his reign were hopeful and were commended: but afterwards he was tyrannical, and that in the most aggravating way. So likewise of Heliogabalus and Commodus were good hopes entertained, that they would turn out praiseworthy princes and rulers: but the hope failed. The one, Heliogabalus, was a vile wretch, who gave himself up to all manner of profligacy and debauchery, and was a thorough beast. The other ought to have been styled, not Commodus but Incommodus, that is, a curse to the land." "This also is vanity," to wit, worldly greatness. The practical conclusion for Israel is—"Why vexest thou thyself about a handful of vanity, when God bestows on thee unchanging treasures? If the pound is thine surely thou mayst let the farthing go."

CHAPTER V. 1-6.

The author whose task it was, now in the way of consolation and then in the way of admonition, to lay before the people of God, groaning under the yoke of the Persians, that which might be for the health of their soul, here passes over to an entirely new theme. He proceeds to bring to light the evils which at that time were to be found in connection with the public worship of God. If his admonitions went to the heart their effect would be contentment with the divine arrangements. True self-knowledge throws light on the otherwise dark ways of God. When one learns to murmur against one's own sin, one ceases to murmur against God. A superficial piety sought to put God off with sacrifices, instead of walking in the way of His commands: prayer in many cases degenerated into mere chatter: vows were lightly taken, but when it came to the fulfilment they hung back. There was lacking a true and hearty fear of God: and that was the

root and spring of all these evils. This section shows that the book belongs to a time when the very hearts, which at an earlier period had openly renounced God, and given in their adherence to heathenism, were devoted to a *dead orthodoxy.* Such a time began shortly after the return from the exile, as soon as the first mighty stirrings of the hearts had relaxed, as soon as the first enthusiasm had vanished. How strongly disposed the people were in the time of Nehemiah to withdraw themselves from the services due to God may be seen in Nehemiah xiii. 10-20.

Ver. 1. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be ready to hear, which is better than that fools should give sacrifice, for they consider not that they do evil.* Ver. 2. *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.* Ver. 3. *For the dream comes through the multitude of annoyance, and the voice of fools through the multitude of words.* Ver. 4. *When thou vowest a vow unto God defer not to pay it, for fools are not pleasing: what thou vowest, pay.* Ver. 5. *It is better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.* Ver. 6. *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, and say not before the angel, for it is an error. Why should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thine hands?* Ver. 7. *For where many dreams are, there are vanities and (even so where) many words: for fear God.*

Ver. 1. The words, "Keep thy feet," show us that the going to the house of God is a serious matter, which had better be omitted if not done in a right spirit. Jerome says: "Non enim ingredi domum dei, sed sine offensione ingredi laudis est." The essential thing is of course to preserve the heart, but the posture of the heart is represented and revealed in the manner of going. The author speaks of feet, perhaps, because through them he had often discerned the state of the heart. The Kri: רגלך, "thy foot," probably owes its origin to a comparison of Proverbs i. 15, iv. 26, 27. Psalm cxix. 101, where the plural is employed, might just as well have been made the subject of comparison. כאשר "so as" is stronger than the simple "when." קרוב never occurs as an *Infin. absol.;*

always only as an adjective. As such James took it in this place: see the Epistle chap. i. 19: ἔστω πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχὺς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι βραδὺς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι:—the latter is an allusion to chap. v. 1. If the word "hear" be referred to the public worship of God, we must look to the reading of the law conjoined with the singing of Psalms: (compare my work, *On the Day of the Lord:*) and then this passage would furnish a proof that, at the time of the author, it was customary to read from the law, and probably to connect therewith expositions and applications. Taking this view the Berleburger Bible remarks: "We must not be satisfied merely with hearing: else it is merely that; and this is not all that is intended. External is external: and the true aim of the external rites of worship is to conduct to the internal." But that the matter to be heard is much rather the voice of the Lord, and that consequently "hearing" has substantially the same force as "obeying," is clear from 1 Samuel xv. 22, where Samuel says to Saul, "hath the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in hearing the voice of the Lord? Behold, to hear (obey) is better than a good sacrifice, and to hearken better than the fat of rams." In Jeremiah vii. 33, also, to hear the voice of the Lord is set in opposition to soulless sacrifices. God, says the prophet, did not command his people concerning soulless sacrifices, but said to them: "Hear (obey) my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Parallel also is the passage, Hosea vi. 6, "for I have pleasure in love, and not in sacrifices; and in knowledge of the Lord more than in burnt offerings: see also Proverbs xxi. 3: "to do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice," with which compare ver. 27: "the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination." What the voice of the Lord calls for are love, righteousness, justice; whereas soulless sacrifices are not claimed by him: to bring them therefore instead of love and the like is the contrary of obedience. The voice of the Lord is known in the first instance from the "roll," *i. e.*, "the volume of the book," (Psalm xl. 8), "the law of Moses," which Malachi, the contemporary of Koheleth admonishes (chap. iii. 22) the lovers of ceremonies to remember. At the same time, however, the voice of the Lord makes itself heard

also in the hearts of the faithful: compare Psalm lxxxv. 9, and the words—"thou hast digged through my ears"—of Psalm xl. 6. By a rather harsh construction, "before that, that fools should give sacrifice," stands for "which is better than that fools should give sacrifice." That זבח signifies here, as always, "slain sacrifices," (not sacrifices in general), which are particularly selected from the whole number of sacrifices, is evident from a comparison of 1 Samuel xv. 22, Hosea vi. 6, Psalm xl. 7, where "slain sacrifices" are mentioned along with "burnt sacrifices." Not of "sacrifices" in general does Koheleth here speak, but of the sacrifices of *fools*, which were not an outward form expressing the worship which is in spirit and truth, but the contrary thereof, namely, an invention whose purpose was to appease God and to silence the conscience. Several commentators explain—"for they know not, in order that they," or, "so that they do evil," appealing to the fact that ידע is frequently used without specification of the object, which must either be supplied from the context, or be taken in the most general possible way (Isaiah xliv. 5, 6, 9, 18, xlv. 20, xvi. 10, Psalm lxxiii. 22). But that the words must rather be explained—"they know not that they do evil," (Ewald, § 280*d*), is clear from that saying of our Lord's which refers back to this passage, πάτερ ἄφες αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἴδασι τί ποιοῦσι (Luke xxiii. 34. Without knowing it they do evil, so that their manner of procedure is to be carefully shunned and avoided.

Ver. 2. From the same want of living fear of God which was at the root of the offering of soulless sacrifices, arose also the use of many words in prayer, and the lightness and frivolity in making vows. The expression—"let thy words be few," as compared with that of ver. 7, "many words," shows that vows are here included. Piel from בהל, in the sense of "to haste," occurs also in chap. vii. 9. The explanation of על is, that the mouth forms, as it were, the foundation of the hasting (Psalm xv. 3). Whoever properly takes to heart that God is in heaven and we upon earth, will be sparing in his words, will say nothing which has not the fullest inward truth, which does not come from the deepest depths of the heart; will be circumspect in his vows, vowing nothing which he cannot, or does not intend to pay. The most grievous

violation of the reverence we owe to God, the most guilty disregard of the fact that God is in heaven, and we on earth, that He is the rich and we the poor, that He is the Almighty and we the powerless, is not to pray at all, to remain entirely dumb towards Him in whose hand are the souls of all living. The admonition, "let thy words be few," is not meant to set limits to the glow and fire of devotion. It is directed not against the inwardly devout, but against the *superficially religious*, who fancy that in the multitude of their words they have an equivalent for the devotion they lack. That the saying of our Lord's against the Pharisees who made long prayers by way of pretext (Mark xii. 40): προσευχόμενοι δὲ μὴ βαττολογήσητε, etc. (Matthew vi. 7, 8), contains a reference to this passage is the less to be called in question, seeing that that type of a short and good prayer which He gave his disciples immediately afterwards, begins with the words—"Our Father, which art in *Heaven*." In the Berleburger Bible it is remarked: "What a wide application may be made of these words both to teaching and preaching, to prayer and to our ordinary life! How many sermons, hours long, would be expunged by this censorship, although never so skilfully arranged and put together according to the preaching-art. And if all sermons and other discourses concerning divine things were purged, as in truth they ought to be, from all useless, unedifying, fruitless, offensive and wrong words, how few would the censorship leave standing.—The Saviour took note of this advice, and therefore prescribed a short form of prayer, at the very commencement of which the petitioner is moved to remember the majesty of God who is in Heaven, though the majesty is tempered by the kind and lovely name of Father."

Ver. 3. Between the two clauses of this verse there is no internal connexion, except in so far as one wretched thing is compared with another. The main point is simply the relation of cause and effect. The voice of fools is the result of many words so far as by their means it is *recognised or known*. If we draw out the sum total of many words, the result is, the voice of the fool. In regard to ענין which is not "business" but "annoyance," compare what is said on chap. i. 13.

In Job vii. 14 also mention is made of the terrible dreams to which sufferers are exposed.

Ver. 4, 5. These verses have special respect to vows, and refer back to Deuteronomy xxiii. 22, 23: "When thou vowest a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it will be sin in thee. But if thou forbearest to vow, it is no sin in thee." That the divine names are employed not at random but according to definite principles is quite clear in this place. In this quotation, which otherwise is almost literal, the simple לאלהים stands instead of the words "Jehova thy God," of the original passage. The Berleburger Bible says: "Many persons when they are in need or desire aught from God precipitate themselves into certain vows, and promise more than they have afterwards any desire to fulfil when avarice comes in and incites them not to perform that to which they have solemnly engaged themselves. In the hour of need many promise to God golden mountains—how thankful they will be, how they will improve themselves if they should only become again free and healthy. But alas! how soon does the deceitful heart forget all that when it is out of the strait."

Ver. 6. According to several the meaning of the words, "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin," is that "vows lightly taken excite the carnal mind to stronger opposition." But in the Old Testament בשר never signifies the fleshly mind. Only one passage, namely Genesis vi. 3, contains an approximation to this signification. In James iii. 6, where we read of the tongue, ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα, and the dependence of which from the passage under consideration can the less be denied as the succeeding words καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως refer back to chap. xii. 6, and thence receive their assured explanation, בשר is rendered by σῶμα, and not by σάρξ. Σῶμα is not employed there in opposition to soul, but to designate the body as endued with a soul;—in short, it is a designation of the whole person from the bodily side, because, in the first instance, the tongue is a member of the body. So also here בשר signifies the entire personality. In several passages the soul appears as an appurtenance of the בשר; see Leviticus xvii. 11, Job xii. 10. Cartwright's remarks here are quite to the point: "Cave ne ore tuo, unico

eoque perexiguo membro, reatum tibi cum corpore tum animo accersas." הַחֲטִיא here is not "to lead into sin," as in Exodus xxii. 33, but, "to set into the position of a sinner," "to bring guilt on any one," as in Deuteronomy xx. 4, and Jeremiah xxxii. 35. God, who will not be mocked (Galatians vi. 7), will punish the whole person for the misuse of the tongue in vowing that which one does not afterwards perform.—*And say not before the angel:* (do thine office, atone for me, bring the sacrifice usual in such cases), *for it is an error.* מַלְאָךְ is "a messenger in general," then specially "messenger of God," "angel." The priestly order is described as the angel, in order to indicate its high dignity, and the heavy responsibility attaching to frivolous conduct towards it. It supplies God's place (2 Corinthians v. 20). The Septuagint and the Syriac have rendered—"before God." We may not explain the words—"before the *messenger*,"—for it is uncertain whose is the messenger. In the term *angel* is implied the sending from God. There is here a remarkable coincidence with Malachi. In chap. ii. 7, 8, (and except there nowhere else in the Old Testament), the priestly order is brought forward as the messenger of the Lord—"for the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts." The words—"for it is an error"—point back to Numbers xv. 27-31. There a distinction is drawn between sins which are committed בִּשְׁגָגָה and בְּיָד רָמָה, *sins of weakness*, which still cleave even to such as believe and as are consequently right-minded, and *wilful sins* —a distinction which forms the basis of the New Testament doctrine concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost (compare Hebrews x. 26-28). The *former* can be atoned by sacrifices: (compare Numbers xv. 28: "And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly"): the *latter* are on the contrary punished with destruction. One should not be too quick with one's proposal to the priest to offer a sacrifice, fancying that in this way the whole matter is despatched. It may very easily happen that the supposed oversight has a more serious character. In such a case the sacrifice is presented in vain, and the sin remains and involves the soul in God's judgments. It is no light thing to make a mock as it were of the Lord of Heaven and Earth by vowing to Him

what we have no serious intention of performing. We meet in Malachi with the same religious superficiality which fancies that the good God will not be so particular, that he will surely be easily satisfied, especially at a time when He Himself bestows so little upon men. We read in chap. i. 8, "When ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is not evil: and if ye offer the lame and sick, it is not evil:—bring it now unto thy Governor, if he will be pleased with thee!" On the ground of such facts Malachi in ver. 6 brings against the people the charge of contempt of the name of God.—*Why should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands?* On this the Berleburger Bible observes: "Vows were made for the most part of the fruits of the earth and of cattle; and when they were not performed the offenders were punished by a special curse on that which was vowed."

Ver. 7. *For where many dreams are, there are vanities and many words,* with them is it even so. *For fear God.* כי refers to the exhortation, indirectly contained in what precedes, to avoid many words in our intercourse with God. Whoever fears God truly will speak nothing before Him that does not come from the very centre of his heart, will vow nothing which he is not resolved inviolably to perform.

CHAPTER V. 8-9.

The point of departure of these verses is the heathenish tyranny under which the people of God sighed. But this should not be permitted to lead us astray: we should rather direct our eyes to the heavenly King who in His own appointed time will bring everything again into order.

Ver. 8. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor and violent perverting of judgment and justice in the province, marvel not at the purpose, for one who is high watches over the high, and a highest over them.* Ver. 9. *And the advantage of the earth is in all: a king to the cultivated field.*

Ver. 8. גזל is employed with the genitive of that which is robbed in Ezekiel xviii. 18. The robbery is committed on judgment and justice. So certainly as the Lord hath spoken in view of the unrighteous oppression of his people by the

heathens, "I hate unrighteous robbery," (Isaiah lxi. 8,) so certain is it that he cannot behold such conduct unmoved. מדינה, which properly means "jurisdiction," is the *terminus technicus* for the provinces of the Asiatic World-Empires, and is used especially of the provinces of the Persian Empire. The word occurs only in the post-exile Authors, (Books of Kings, The Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah,) amongst which, the use of the term shows that Koheleth must be reckoned. The province can only be the Jewish one, מדינתא יהוד (Ezra v. 8,) which comes before us just in the same manner as *the* Province in Ezra v. 8; Nehemiah i. 3; vii. 6; xi. 3. To the exhortation "not to marvel," at the strange *quid pro quo* by which we may easily be led to wrong conclusions regarding God and His Kingdom, correspond the words—ἀγαπητοὶ μὴ ξενίζεσθε τῇ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει, ὡς ξένου ὑμῖν συμβαίνοντος in 1 Peter iv. 12. חפץ (compare on chap. iii. 1,) may be referred either to the divine pleasure, or to the *tel est mon plaisir* of the authorities who usually introduced their edicts with the words—"it is seemly before me," "it is good before the king," (Daniel iii. 22; vi. 2; iv. 22; Ezra v. 17.) The antidote to surprise is that One who is high watches over the high, one too who is able to cope with all the high, seeing that He is the Highest of All. The sense is quite mistaken by those who find here the empty consolation that—"sooner or later the higher prefect or the king will hear of it, and will interfere with his punishment." The saying here holds true that "one crow does not peck out the other's eyes." A real parallel may be found in Psalm lxxxii., the theme of which is—"God judges amongst the gods." גבהים is used precisely in the same way as עליונים, "the Most High," in Daniel vii. 18-22, and as בוראים "the Creator," in chap. xii. 1, of this same book. For remarks on plural designations of God, which are independent of Elohim, and which owe their rise to the same source, namely, to the intention of indicating the fulness of powers in God, see my "*Beiträge*," 2 P., 256, 59, 60, 309, 19. A similar plural relating to the same subject occurs also in Psalm lviii. 12,—"Verily God judges, שפטים, on the earth." The suffix in עליהם has relation to the plurality which lies in the second גבה. As to thought there is a perfect agreement between this passage and Psalm xcvii. 9,—"For thou, Lord, art Most High

over all the earth." Luther says: "This book consequently teaches thee to let thine heart have rest and peace, and not to trouble and worry thyself over much when things go wrongly, but to accustom thyself to be able to say, when the devil brings malice, injustice, violence, and burdens on the poor, 'Such is the way of the world, but God will judge and avenge it.' And again, when thou seest things going well, learn to say, 'God be praised, who, after all, so rules, that we do not merely suffer evil and injustice, but receive also much good.' Moreover, let every man, according to his rank, and God's command, do his work with the best industry: other things let him commend to God; let him be patient and wait for Him who is able to find out and judge the ungodly and unjust. He who cannot lift a great stone, let him leave it lying and lift what he can. Wherefore, when thou seest that kings, princes and lords misuse their power, that judges and advocates take bribes and allow causes to sink or swim as they can, being wise and sensible thou wilt think within thyself,—'God will sometime bring about a better state.'"

Ver. 9. "The tilled field" of this verse denotes the earth, so far as it is cultivated and inhabited, the תבל the *οἰκουμένη*. In Genesis ii. 5 also "the field," is the broad and wide plain, the plain of the earth. The King is the Heavenly one, who has the will and the power to put an end to the oppressions of the earth at the right time, the "Father of the orphan and the Judge of the widow," and the Saviour to whom all *personæ miserabiles* look up and after whom their hearts cry out. In regard to matter, Psalm xlvii. 8, "King of the whole earth is God," is a parallel passage. בכל may mean either "in all that, in all gloomy events and conditions" presented by the earth, or, on the whole, "in general," like לכל in 1 Chronicles vii. 5. Both come substantially to the same thing. For even on the latter view, בכל calls attention to the fact, that in such and all similar circumstances God is "the sure stronghold of persecuted souls." Several different renderings have been given, which originate in the incapacity properly to enter into the spirit of the poetical expression—"the cultivated field;" for example, Luther renders "and besides that, is the King in the whole land to cultivate the field," with the explanation that, he defends and protects his subjects against wrong, burdens and violence:—Ewald,

"with all that a king is set over the country," with the explanation, "and since with all that it remains an advantage for the country to have a king, that is, a well ordered government," or as Elster expresses it, "the worst government is better than unbridled anarchy." Stier even translates—"and the profit of the earth is everywhere; he who cultivates his field is a king." Against all these interpretations the consideration is decisive, that the Niphal of עבד occurs only in the signification "to be cultivated." Knobel's ingenuous observation, that, "Strictly taken, the sentence does not belong to this connection," is exactly applicable to all these explanations. The faulty Kri הוא for היא arose simply from exegetical perplexities.

CHAPTER V. 10-20.

In verses 8 and 9, Koheleth comforted the poor who lay groaning under the oppressions and exactions of the heathen authorities, by directing their minds to the heavenly Ruler and Judge; and thus he put into their mouth and heart such words as, "to thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that sittest in the heavens," and, "we raise our heart and hands towards the day of redemption." In these verses now before us, he seeks to raise them up to the right point of view for the consideration and estimate of those earthly possessions at whose loss they were so grieved: "What is the wealth of this life? It is but a handful of sand, and uneasiness for the heart." His first purpose is to counteract the pain felt because of their loss. At the same time, however, he has the further aim of opposing avarice, which, in times of distress, so easily lays hold on men's hearts. Avarice and envy have the same root, namely, the false estimate of earthly possessions. The intention of the author to warn his fellow-countrymen against avarice is pretty plainly shown in ver. 17-19.

Ver. 10. *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with riches: and he that loveth riches hath no gain. This also is vanity.* Ver. 11. *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them, and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* Ver. 12. *Sweet is the sleep of the labouring man, whether he eats little*

or much: and the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. Ver. 13. *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun,—riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt.* Ver. 14. *But those riches perish by a sore evil, and he begetteth a son and there is nothing in his hand.* Ver. 15. *As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked does he go away again as he came, and he takes nothing, notwithstanding his labour, which he might carry away with him in his hand.* Ver. 16. *And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came so shall he go, and what profit hath he, that he hath laboured for the wind.* Ver. 17. *All his days also he eateth in darkness and hath much discontent, and then his sickness and wrath.* Ver. 18. *Behold what I have seen: that it is good and comely to eat and to drink, and to see good in all his labour wherewith he laboureth under the sun the number of the days of his life, which God gave him, for that is his portion.* Ver. 19. *Also to whatever man God giveth riches and possessions, and giveth him power to eat thereof and to rejoice in his labour, this is a gift of God.* Ver. 20. *For he thinks not much of the days of his life because God hears him through the joy of his heart.*

Ver. 10. The rich man is the heathen. This is especially clear in verse 6 where the same subject is treated. But it is also evident from a comparison with verse 7, where the poor man is the Israelite. The connection with verse 7 and 8 is quite plain. *There* the minds of those who lie groaning under the oppressions of the heathen are directed to the impending judgment of God. *Here* the author exhibits to them the true significance of riches, and thus teaches them to regard in a different manner their own losses, and the heathen gains. Hitzig remarks, "this section consoles the poor man, or him who is poor in the way described in verse 7; the friend of money, (ver. 9,) is one who from covetousness oppresses the poor, (ver. 7.) In James ii. 1-13, and v. 1-6, also is the rich man the heathen."* "He is foolish who vexes himself about a handful of vanity:"—this is proved in the first class, by the

* Bengel remarks on James ii. 7: loquitur apostolus maxime de divitibus ethnicis, cf. 1 Peter iv. 14; ii. 12. Inter Judæos enim non erant multi divites, certe Hieros.

fact that riches do not satisfy the heart,—a fact which must be patent to every one who has noticed how the rich man is ever craving for more. In the second clause of the verse it is affirmed that riches afford no profit at all, that they are unfruitful. To the words here, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with riches," Jerome adduces the parallel dictum from Horace, "semper avarus eget." Luther compares chap. i. 8, "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing:" and remarks—"Alexander the Great had not enough in his many kingdoms, not even in a whole world. It is just so in other things also. The man who has learning, wisdom, honour, property, strength, beauty, health, and so forth, is notwithstanding not satisfied therewith. Thus the wretched poverty-stricken life of the covetous man is a good mirror for the rest of us. For as the greedy bellies and penny kissers have money and yet dare not use a farthing of it cheerfully, but are constantly looking further for money which they have not, so is our conduct in regard to all other gifts. What is a poor, troubled, uneasy heart and mind, which is always looking for that which it does not yet possess but avaricious: therefore is it vanity and vexation? Are not on the contrary those happy people who content themselves with God's present mercies, with moderate means of life, and leave God to care for the future?" *And whoso loveth riches hath no gain:* Vulgate: fructum non capiet ex eis. In regard to מי אהב, which corresponds to the simple אהב previously employed, see Ewald, § 331 b. המון never signifies directly riches, but always, noise, bustle. In Psalm xxxvii. 16, the noise of the wicked stands for their wealth, which surrounds them who scrape together, who employ cunning and force, with noise, bustle and disquiet: and so here riches are represented as tumult, noise. We are thus taught that they have much inconvenience from this wealth of nothing. Why there is no profit is further shown subsequently when the author seeks by a vivid and picturesque representation to impress their hearts with the fact that life does not consist in the multitude of our possessions. Also this is vanity; like so much besides on this poor earth which offers so many fictitious possessions.

Ver. 11. *When goods increase they are increased that eat them.* Eaters come from all sides, for the rich are always

subject to claims proportionate to their wealth. Luther says: "this is a weighty and glorious saying. An avaricious man is never contented; he is always scraping and collecting. And for whom does he gather? For, whatever he may fancy, it is as the proverb says,—'A niggard will have his spender.' So warns the Scripture, and such is the lesson of experience from the beginning of the world, that all hoarded-up treasures, especially such as are due to injustice, find their distributors and devourers either during the life, or after the death of the avaricious collectors, who themselves get nothing but the toil and labour. King Solomon was also a rich king. Who made use of his great possessions? His royal household. Who uses, who eats and drinks up the wealth of princes? All manner of attendants, troopers, servants, waiters, officials and innumerable other fellows who do not in the least deserve it. Whoso then gathers riches, gathers devourers. Therefore, why plague thyself to collect much and to increase thy treasure? However many possessions thou hast thou canst not do more than fill thy belly and clothe thy poor body. If God gives thee riches use thy share as thou usest thy share of water, *and let the rest flow on:* and if thou doest it not, thy gathering will still be in vain." The plural בעלים is used for the abstract "lordship."

Ver. 12. *Sweet is the sleep of the labouring man,* of him who is compelled to act according to the instruction given in Exodus xx. 9, "six days shalt thou labour," and to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, as was the lot of Israel at that time. *And the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep:* Jerome says, "incocto cibo in stomachi angustiis æstuante." According to the general usage of Scripture, a "rich man" is not always one who has much wealth, but also one who acts contrary to the admonition of the Psalmist in Psalm lxii. 11, and whose heart cleaves to riches. In Mark x. 23-25, the "rich man," and the man who *trusts* to his riches, seem to be used interchangeably. He to whom riches are a secondary matter, who does not set his heart upon them, will not be so designated. Amongst the heathen it was one and the same thing to have possessions externally, and to be internally possessed by riches, to be worshippers of mammon. For they were destitute of that saving liberating power which

springs from a connection with the living God: Mammon *must necessarily* be their God, because they did not know the true God, or rather, were not known of him.

Ver. 13. *A sore evil:* properly, a painful evil, חלה = נחלה, Nahum iii. 19: Jeremiah xiv. 17: compare in my Christology the remarks on Isaiah liii. 10. *Riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt,* inasmuch as he loses them, (ver. 14,) and becomes so much more unhappy than if he had never possessed them. This is true of individuals: this holds good also of entire peoples. How miserable were the Egyptians after they were cast down from the height of their power and wealth. So also the Persians, whom the writer immediately refers to in this place. The fact that "riches attract murderers and moreover often lead to eternal damnation," does not here come into consideration. The author himself gives an explanation of the words—"to his hurt or misfortune,"—in the 13th verse, and beyond that we may not attempt to go. In this way all random guessing is prevented.

Ver. 14. *By a sore evil;* (compare i. 13, iv. 8).

Ver. 15. And, the author proceeds to say in this verse, apart from such catastrophes, death puts an end utterly to the possession of wealth. In death the rich and the poor are alike. What ceases with death cannot make us truly happy, even while we have it.* That that which is here spoken of is something common to men as men, to men in general, is evident from the fundamental passage in Job i. 21, and the parallel passage, 1 Timothy vi. 7, where the vanity of riches and the advisableness of contentedness are grounded on the fact that, as we brought nothing with us into the world, so we can take nothing with us out of it. *Notwithstanding his labour:* which consequently he has employed in vain and for nought.

Ver. 16. The thought contained in ver. 15 is here repeated with emphasis, in order to point out its weight and to set the folly of envy in its true light. *This also,* no less than the *sore evil* of ver. 13. There it was the πλούτου ἀδηλότης

* Seb. Schmidt, "Novum hoc est pro fugienda avaritia argumentum, sumtum ab eo, quod opum possessor, licet morte etiam naturali moriatur, et divitias suas usque ad finem vitæ retinuerit, nihil tamen eorum, quæ habet, secum auferre possit, sed nudus abire cogatur."

(1 Timothy vi. 17), the vicissitudes to which riches are exposed (Matthew vi. 19, 20): here it is death that puts an end to all possessions.

Ver. 17. And what must a man not endure for the sake of such an empty and vain good. *He eateth in darkness,* even though he may be seated in a well lighted hall. For he has no light in his heart: there all is gloom and sadness. In 1 Timothy vi. 10, it is said of those who seek to become rich, ἑαυτοὺς περιέπειραν ὀδύναις πολλαῖς, "they pierce themselves through with many sorrows." Whoso is visited by such pains, for him external lights are kindled in vain. Analogous is the frequent employment in the Old Testament of the darkenings of the sun and moon as an image of hard and gloomy times: see Jeremiah iv. 23, Amos viii. 9-10, Micah iii. 6, and chap. xii. 2, of this book. The sun shines truly only for the happy. אכל is used in its strict and proper meaning, as is evident from ver. 18. Luther remarks: "To eat in darkness is nothing else than to pass one's life in sadness and melancholy. Avaricious and uneasy people always find something which does not please them, which causes them to murmur and scold. For they are full of cares, griefs, and anxieties: they can neither eat nor drink cheerfully: they are always meeting with something that frets and annoys them." כעס is the third preterite. *And then his sickness and wrath.* The origin of the sickness is clear from the preceding כעס and the following קצף: he becomes sick with vexation and wrath at those who touch the mammon on which his heart is fixed. Cartwright says—"nihil ut illi ex omni labore et fatigatione emolumenti supersit, non magis quam si leves quasdam et nullius ponderis glumas s. pulverem coacervasset, quem ventus uno flatu subito dispelleret."

Ver. 18. That after אני we must mentally set a colon: "Behold, what I have seen: that it is, etc." is evident from the separating accent at the word אני and from the pointing אָנִי and not אֲנִי. We may take either טוב or יפה as an adverb, or even explain—"that it is good, comely." *To eat, to drink, to see good* (chap. ii. 24) forms the contrast to scraping avarice. To the securing of that which the writer has recognised as good there needs no heaping up of treasures. The words—"the number of the days of his life," are meant

to remind us that the shorter man's life is, so much the more ought we to be on our guard against seeking happiness where it is not to be found.

Ver. 19. *Also:* that is, to say further this also, Ewald, 352 b. *God gives him power,* in that He frees him by His Spirit from the bonds of avarice. This takes place, however, only in connection with the divinely appointed means, only within the bounds of God's heritage. The heathen *must* serve mammon; they are sold under his dominion, and for this reason their riches are not to be counted as good fortune. השליט always signifies "to make to rule," (Psalm cxix. 133; Daniel ii. 38-48). The object of the rule is either *one's own heart,* which the natural man, separated from God, has not in his own power: or *riches,* which without this action of God that makes free, are not a good, but a torment. The Berleburger Bible remarks: "made him Lord over it, that is, along with possessions has bestowed on him also a free and generous soul, so that he may not be a slave of mammon, but understand how to use it freely and rightly." In the clause, "that is a gift of God," the emphasis does not lie on אלהים but on מתת, as is clear from the word כי at the commencement of ver. 19—"it is a noble gift, for." The divine causality was prominently brought forward previously.

Ver. 20. *He thinks not much of the days of his life,* that is, they pass smoothly on. 1 Kings viii. 35, and 2 Chronicles vi. 26, furnish a sufficient warrant for the meaning "answer" given to the Hiph. of ענה. All other meanings are incapable of proof. Berleburger Bible: "To the pure all things are pure (Titus i. 15), and so a pure man may undoubtedly use riches with purity; and it will, therefore, chiefly depend on each one's own heart, on how it stands before God. But if any person is unable to remain just as contented and calm, when house and home are burnt down, or when some other damage is done to his property, he proves himself to be not yet truly composed and satisfied: *that is the test thereof.*"

CHAPTER VI.

The discussion of the theme—"the vanity of riches"—is here continued, with the intent, in the first instance, of repressing the envy felt at the advantage enjoyed by the heathen world in this respect, and then in order to undermine the prevailing covetousness which proceeded from the same root as envy, namely, the false estimate of earthly possessions.

Ver. 1. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and heavily does it weigh upon man.* Ver. 2. *A man to whom God giveth riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, and God giveth him not power to eat thereof, for a stranger will eat it, that is vanity and an evil disease.* Ver. 3. *If a man beget a hundred, and live many years, so that the days of his life be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no grave: so, say I: an untimely birth is better than he.* Ver. 4. *For in vanity came it in, and it departeth in darkness, and with darkness is its name covered.* Ver. 5. *Moreover it saw not the sun, and knew it not: this hath more rest than that.* Ver. 6. *And if one should live a thousand years twice, and should not see good: do not all go to one place?* Ver. 7. *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied.* Ver. 8. *For what advantage hath the wise over the fool? What, the miserable that knoweth to walk before the living?* Ver. 9. *Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul: this also is vanity and empty effort.* Ver. 10. *What he is: long ago was his name named, and it is known that he is man and cannot contend with Him that is mightier than he.* Ver. 11. *For there are many things that increase vanity, what profit hath man?* Ver. 12. *For who knoweth what is good for man in life, for the number of the days of his vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow: for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?*

Ver. 1. רבה may refer either to *frequency* (Septuagint, Vulgate, "frequens;" Luther; "and it is common amongst men,")

or to *size*. In favour of the latter view are decisive the principal passage, Genesis vi. 5, and the parallel passages, chap. ii. 21; viii. 6, where רעה רבה signifies "a *great* evil." That which on a superficial examination appears as a great *good*, turns out, on more careful inquiry to be a great *evil*. The author's commencing at once with such a description of the riches of worldly-minded men must have produced a great effect and given envy a severe blow.

Ver. 2. The rich man is the Persian (chap. x. 20). One ought not to envy him his riches. He does not dare to enjoy his wealth, and the enemy will soon take it away from him. How is it possible that that should be a matter for envy which more closely viewed is but a vain show? There were of course rich spendthrifts among the Persians also. But the example of the covetous rich man served as a proof that riches in themselves are not an enviable good. *Riches and wealth and honour*, are put together in this way also in 2 Chronicles i. 11. *God gives him not power*, that is, he delivers him not from the bonds of avarice by which he is held bound; (compare chap. v. 18). *The stranger* is the successor of the Persian in the dominion of the world. נכרי is quite generally used of such as belong to another nation and society (Deuteronomy xvii. 15), and that it is to be taken in this sense here is evident from the correspondence that exists between the words, "a stranger will eat it," of this verse, and those of the 3d verse, "also he will have no grave." References cautiously made to the impending catastrophe of the Persian empire may be found also elsewhere: see chap. xi. 1-3; ix. 18. The expression, "evil disease," which has much the same force as "an evil is like a disease," is taken from Deuteronomy xxviii. 59.

Ver. 3. *Hundred*, namely, sons. The phrase—"the days of the years," is constantly used, especially in the Pentateuch, to designate the time of one's life (Genesis xxv. 7; xlvii. 8, 9. Psalm xc. 10). The words, "his soul is not filled with good," correspond to the words, "God giveth him not power to eat thereof," of ver. 2: and "he has no grave," to the words, "a stranger will eat it." קבורה elsewhere signifies always "Grave," and therefore we must give it this meaning in the only passage, namely Jeremiah xxii. 19, where the meaning "Burial"

seems to be required. The grave of the ass is the flaying ground. The preposition is omitted there, because the relation is quite clear in itself. Allusion is here made to a catastrophe like that depicted in Psalm lxxix. 3, "their blood have they shed like water, and there was none to bury them." Compare parallel passages, such as Jeremiah viii. 2, where of the godless it is declared, "they shall not be gathered, nor be buried: dung shall they be on the field," ix. 21, xxv. 33; Isaiah xiv. 19, 20, and what is written of Jezebel in 2 Kings ix. Seb. Schmidt and Rambach explain incorrectly, "ex turpi tenacitate non audeat aliquid honestæ sepulturæ destinare." Better than the lot of such a rich man,—a life without enjoyment, and then not even a grave,—is the lot of an untimely birth, which, though it has enjoyed no good, has experienced also no suffering.

Ver. 4, 5. On these verses it is remarked in the Berleburger Bible, "the meaner and worse the condition of an untimely birth is made, so much the greater must also appear the misery of a covetous man." The last words of verse 5, "this has rest above that," give the ground of the judgment that "an untimely birth is better than he," (ver. 3). Rest, *freedom from suffering*, it is in regard to which an untimely birth has the advantage over such an unfortunate rich man, who ought in fairness to be an object of *pity*, instead of being one of *envy*.

Ver. 6. *And if one a thousand years* (which measure the lives of the first fathers of the human race nearly reached) *should live twice over*, (Jerome, "et non ut Adam prope mille sed duobus millibus vixerit annis") is he then to be counted happy? *Do not all go to one place?* Can he perhaps fetch up in Sheol, where all arrive in a like state of poverty, (οὐδὲν γὰρ εἰσηνέγκαμεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, δῆλον ὅτι οὐδὲ ἐξενεγκεῖν τι δυνάμεθα, 1 Timothy vi. 7) that which he has lost on earth?

Ver. 7. *All the labour of man is for his mouth*, (falsely explained by Luther—"on every man is labour imposed in his measure"), which is easy to fill, and in the rich man is not larger than in the poor. The Berleburger Bible says: "Can they carry more than one garment on the body? Can they eat more than till they are filled?" The rational conclusion to be drawn from the fact presented in these words, is that which is given us in 1 Timothy vi. 8,—ἔχοντες δὲ διατροφὰς καὶ σκεπά-

σματα, τούτοις ἀρκεσθησόμεθα. But that still, notwithstanding its limited capacity of enjoyment, the soul of man is not satisfied, is very strange, and is a strong proof how greatly the human race has been under the dominion of sin and folly which produce ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβερὰς (1 Timothy vi. 9), ever since the day spoken of in Genesis iii.*

Ver. 8. In this verse are advanced the grounds of the proposition laid down with such generality in ver. 7, "that the soul of man is not satisfied." So deep laid is that hereditary disease of the human race, avarice, that not even the covenant people, not even the congregation of the chosen, is free from it. Wisdom is invariably represented in this book as the prerogative of Israel, folly as belonging to the heathen. The *wise man* ought in all fairness to be free from such a disease. But in reality it is otherwise. Even in the midst of the covenanted people must the Lord preach: "Take heed that ye be not covetous, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." To a Timothy even, St. Paul felt it necessary to write: σὺ δέ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε τοῦ Θεοῦ, ταῦτα φεῦγε (1 Timothy vi. 11). In the old Testament the members of the kingdom of God are frequently styled "poor and wretched." For them many sources of pain open themselves up, which the world does not know: in all the sufferings which befal them they confess a visitation of their sins, and receive them as a token of God's wrath: they do not try to distract their minds nor give themselves up to illusions, they do not gild over their misery but take up their cross willingly: and finally they are hated by the world because God has chosen them out of the world. That these miserable ones

* The meaning of the verse was accurately given by Cartwright: "Quod ob rem tantulam, quæ tam parabilis est, nosmet tantopere cruentamus, nosque anxiis laboribus et intempestivis curis conficimus.—Cum omnia, quæ quis improbo labore parat ad victum et cultum corporis referantur, sitque natura paucis contenta, insanam prorsus et prodigiosam hanc habendi inexplebilem cupiditatem esse, necesse est.—Deus os nostrum, in quod alimenta ingerimus, perangustum finxit: habendi cupiditas tamen tam late diffunditur, ac si os nostrum gurgitis et voraginis cujusdam instar, Jordanis fluvio uno haustu absorbendo idoneum esset; aut si Leviathanis os illis obtigisset, in quod plaustrum cum suis qui illud trahunt equis recipitur: ventriculus cum longitudine et latitudine vix sit palmaris, illi tamen farciendo ita omnes nervos suos intendit cupiditas acsi plus quam dolearis esset."

should also be assailed by earthly desires is the more to be wondered at since "they know to walk before the living," since they are the nation of revelation, the only people on the wide earth to whom God has given, in his law, a rule to regulate their conduct. Compare Deuteronomy iv. 5, 6: "Behold I teach you to-day statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me: and ye shall keep them and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people:" also Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20—"He sheweth His word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He does not deal so with any heathen, and his judgments, they know them not." The reverse of those who know to walk before the living, are "the fools who do not know to go into the city," (chap. x. 15) the heathen.

Ver. 9. מראה is universally the object of sight, that which is seen: so in Leviticus xiii. 12,—"according to all the sight of the eyes of the priest," that is, according to all that is seen by the eyes of the priest. Seeing that man can so easily have a sufficiency, it is better to rejoice in that which lies before his eyes, however trivial it may be, than to wander away into the clouds with our desires, (μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε, Luke xii. 29,) and to vex ourselves with plans and hopes which very easily deceive, and even if fulfilled bring us no real happiness. The Berleburger Bible says: "this is the wandering of the soul which then runs about amongst the creatures, and like an Esau hunts in the fields of this world for the good food which wisdom finds only at home and in the calmness of contentment." Luther remarks,—"Solomon's opinion is, that it is better to make use of that which lies before our eyes, that is, of what is now at hand, than that the soul go wandering to and fro. Solomon's will is that we make use of the present, thank God for it, and not think of anything else—like the dog in Æsop which snapped at the shadow and let the flesh fall. What he intends then is that we should use that which God has given before our eyes, that which is now here, and be content therewith and not follow our own soul which is never satisfied: as he said before. Let every Christian then abide by that which he has, which God gives him just now: that

pleases him: but the godless are not so: on the contrary, all that they see is a torment to them, because they do not make use of the present, but their soul runs hither and thither and everywhere and is never satisfied. Consequently, when a godless man has money, it does not suffice him, he uses it not, but desires more: if he has a wife, he is not content, but wants another: if he has a whole kingdom he is unsatisfied: like Alexander the Great whom a world could not satisfy. Solomon therefore forbids the soul running to and fro, as it is said in the Hebrew, that is, we are not to be always weaving our thoughts together into plans. And the sum is this—use the present: for that also is vanity and vexation, to wit, when the soul wanders thus restlessly about."

Ver. 10. *What he is*—he, namely, to whom reference is here made—: *Long ago was his name named:* that we are told by the name long ago given to him. There is a reference here to Genesis v. 2,—"and he called their name *man*, on the day on which they were created." In this name is expressed the *impotence* of man. He describes men as *earthly*, because they are taken from the earth, (Genesis ii. 7,) and because they must return to it, (chap. iii. 19.) The article in התקיף which occasioned difficulty to the Masorite is quite regular. Hitzig remarks, "the meaning is not that a man cannot fight with a stronger (*e. g.* man,) but that, man cannot struggle with the particular person who surpasses men, namely, God." Paul appears to allude to this passage in 1 Corinthians x. 22, μὴ ἰσχυρότεροι αὐτοῦ ἐσμεν: the practical conclusion therefrom is the uncertainty of riches, the ἀδηλότης πλούτου; and our duty, evidently is, not to set our hopes upon them but upon the living God, (1 Timothy vi. 17,) not to strive after riches, but to endeavour to stand well with our Creator. Inasmuch as man is absolutely dependent on God, he ought not to engage in many distracting occupations, he should not vex himself with cunning and violent modes of obtaining riches, because he cannot protect what he has gained, and knows not but that at any moment he may hear the call, "thou fool, this night will thy soul be required of thee." How foolish, then, to envy the heathen that wealth which may, like the flower of the field, so soon fade away, (James i. 10, 11.)

Ver. 11. *For there are many things that increase vanity.*

דברים in the sense of "words" does not suit the connection. More property, more vanity. That is as certain as that man is not the lord of his own life, but is absolutely dependent on a higher power. What did it help the Persian that he had subdued a great part of the world and had appropriated its treasures to himself? When Alexander came and violently assailed the two-horned ram of the Persian, Empire, (Daniel viii. 6,) it became evident that it had only increased vanity. The same thing takes place in great commercial crises. Cartwright says—"quam ob rem animum ad studium pietatis convertamus, quæ ad omnia utilis est et promissiones habet præsentis et futuræ vitæ, (1 Timothy iv.") *What more has man?* The rich have not in reality more than the poor. For their advantages turn out, on a closer examination, to be mere delusion and vanity: and they vanish as soon as the judgments of God go abroad in the world.

Ver. 12. The question—*For who knoweth what is good for man in life?*—refers not only to earthly goods, but to eternal, to the true and real goods. (Luke xvi. 11.) whose possession is in all circumstances desirable. This is clear from the connection with the foregoing enquiry—"what more has man?" (of these things?) For who knows what? The words—*for the number of the days of his vain life, which he spends like a shadow*—(מספר must be supplied with ב from בחיים; that the days can be counted, is a sign of the shortness of the duration of life; compare chap. v. 17,) are meant to teach us that the shorter our life the more important is it that we should not feed ourselves with wind and ashes. In this shadowy existence we should not hunt after unsubstantial shadows. The fleeting, quickly vanishing shadow is an image of the transitoriness and short-livedness of man. Büchner remarks—"a shadow may stretch itself out as long as it can, but when the sun goes down it vanishes and leaves nothing behind it." Compare chap. viii. 13; 1 Chronicles xxix. 15,—"like the shadow are our days upon earth." Psalm ciii. 15,—"man is in his life like grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth." Psalm cxliv. 4, "man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away." The words, "for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" contain the reason for the affirmation that riches are not to be regarded as a true good. Only

on one condition should we be justified in treating them as important, namely, that we knew the future, and had it in our power. Some accident or other may suddenly rob us of what we have gathered with so much toil. Nay more, there may come a great catastrophe which, like the flood, will sweep everything away. *After him*, that is, after his present condition (compare chap. iii. 22 ; vii. 14.) Several have falsely explained—"after his *death*." The practical conclusion is, that we should strive after true possessions : * and then that we should be free from cares, covetousness and envy, content with what we have, however little it may be : ἀρκεῖσθε τοῖς ὀψωνίοις ὑμῶν (Luke iii. 14.) Rambach observes : "Ex quibus omnibus apparet, nihil melius esse quam proscripta turpi avaritia præsentibus contentum esse, iisque cum pia et licita hilaritate frui." Luther remarks . "the hearts of men strive after various kinds of things : one seeks power, another riches : but still they know not whether they shall obtain them. Nor do they make use of God's present gifts, but their heart hankers alone and always after that which they have not, and cannot yet see. He does not speak of that which will come after this life, but means to say, that no man knows what will happen to him after an hour, after a day, or after a year. Julius Cæsar having put down the rest, thought that then he had the game all in his own hands, and meant to set the Roman Empire in fine order : but at the very moment when he was revolving his plans, he was killed in the council at Rome. Why then do we vex and torment ourselves with our own thoughts, when future things are not a single moment in our power ? We ought consequently to be content with that which God gives us each moment, and commit all to Him who alone is acquainted with, and is able to regulate both present and future."

* As Paul Gerhardt sings :—

"Aber was die Seele nährt
Gottes Huld und Christi Blut
Wird von Keiner Zeit verzehrt,
Ist und bleibet allzeit gut.
Erdengut zerfällt und bricht,
Seelengut, das schwindet nicht."

CHAPTER VII. 1-10.

We have here a decalogue of instruction on the sufferings of the people of God and of consolation and admonition in regard thereto. Attention is directed, on the one hand, to the fruit of righteousness which suffering brings, to its blessed termination; and, on the other hand, God's people is warned not to permit itself to be drawn aside to murmurings.

Human existence is subjected to severe sufferings (ver. 1). But these sufferings must serve the best interests of those who love God (ver. 2-4). The misery of the children of God is better than the happiness of the world, for the latter is the forerunner of impending ruin (ver. 5-7). The people of God, on the contrary, if they are only patient and content with the leadings of their God, will receive the best at the end.

Ver. 1. *Better is name than good oil, and the day of death, than the day of one's birth.* Ver. 2. *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all men, and the living lays it to heart.* Ver. 3. *Better is anger than laughter, for when the countenance looks sad, the heart becomes merry.* *Ver.* 4. *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of fools in the house of mirth.* Ver. 5. *Better is it to hear the rebuke of the wise, than a man who hears the song of fools.* Ver. 6. *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools, and this also is vanity.* Ver. 7. *For oppression maketh a wise man mad, and a gift destroyeth the heart.* Ver. 8. *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: better the patient in spirit than the proud in spirit.* Ver. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.* Ver. 10. *Say not thou: what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for with wisdom thou dost not inquire concerning this.*

Ver. 1. The first clause has no internal connection whatever with the second: the means adopted to point out such a connection have been plainly artificial and farfetched. The point of comparison is simply this, that, in the first case, as well as the second, the one thing mentioned is better than

the other. Just in the same way is the point of comparison external and general in chap. v. 2. טוב occurs oftener in this chapter than in any other chapter of the Old Testament. The first clause of the verse is based on Proverbs xxii. 1, "name is more to be preferred than great riches." Here, however, the sentence appears to be more pointed. שמן has a sound something like שם. From the fundamental passage it is evident that good oil is considered here as something very costly and precious. That there is an internal nexus between the words "ointment" and "name," we should be led to think by the passage in the Song of Solomon i. 3, where שמן and שם are in like manner connected: "In smell are thine ointments good, ointment poured forth is thy name." That in the first clause the great and lovely name is represented under the image of odorous ointments, is expressly said in the second clause. With smell is connected rumour (German, Geruch, and Gerücht): "odores," says Gesenius, appealing to Exodus v. 11, "sæpe ad famam transferuntur." The proposition which is here of primary importance is formed by the words: "and the day of death is better than the day of one's birth." By the day of death we are to understand the day when one dies: this explains the suff. The day of death is better than the day of birth—so speaks the author to such as mourn because of life's lost happiness. He does not wish to persuade them to feel what they do not feel: he allows that they are right whenever they have right on their side. "The world is a vale of tears, and everywhere care, trouble, fears:"—that is an undeniable truth about which we may not dispute with sufferers, and which, above all, we must concede, if we mean really and truly to comfort them. But this assertion, though perfectly true, is only a one-sided truth, and therefore the author does not rest satisfied with it; he goes further, and in connection therewith opens up afterwards points of view which throw light on the gloom and mystery of suffering. When he lays down this proposition, he does not deny that there dwells in man a natural love of life, and that life is in itself a good thing, (compare chap. ix. 4, xi. 7): he does not deny that the clear light of divine grace shines into the darkness of this earthly life (compare chap. ix, 7, 8) "go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine

with a merry heart, for God hath pleasure in thy works:" he does not deny the infinite value of suffering as a school for the spirit; he sees, on the contrary, as is plainly set forth in verses 2 ff., ("the day of death is, indeed, better than the day of birth, *but* yet it is better to go to the house of mourning, etc."), that it is the most important means of purification and progress, that it is therefore disguised grace, and that it constitutes the best preparation for a future existence, for the day when the spirit shall return to God, who gave it (chap. xii. 7). Sayings of similar import we find also in heathen writers,* with this difference, however, that they possessed no key to such sufferings, that they were unable to reconcile them with the divine righteousness and love, and that they were shut out from a knowledge of, and approach to, those sources of consolation which are revealed in the Holy Scriptures. An amplification and illustration of this short saying may be found in Job iii. and Jeremiah xx. Compare especially Jeremiah xx. 18—"Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see suffering and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" To seek happiness in this earthly existence has been considered, ever since the day spoken of in Genesis iii., as identical with gathering grapes from thorns and figs from thistles. The right sense is mistaken by those interpreters who suppose that death comes under consideration here, so far as it opens the way to eternal life, and who compare Philippians i. 21, 23, and Revelations xiv. 13. Amongst them is Melancthon, who remarks: "illa ethnica, optimum non nasci aut quam celerrime aboleri aliena a doctrina ecclesiæ:" and the Berleburger Bible, where we read —"for although the day of death extinguishes the light of this life, it kindles the light of eternal life and blessedness."

Ver. 2. That *the house of mourning* is one in which a

* Grotius: "Valerius Maximus ii. 6—'Thraciæ vero illa natio merito sibi sapientiæ laudem vindicaverit, quæ natales hominum flebiliter, exequias cum hilaritate celebrans, sine ullis doctorum præceptis verum conditionis nostræ habitum pervidit.' Mela de iisdem Thracibus: 'Lugentur apud quosdam puerperia, natique deflentur; funera contra festa sunt et veluti sacra cantu lusuque celebrantur.' De iisdem Solinus: 'Apud plurimos luctuosa sunt puerperia denique recens natum fletu parens excipit: contraversum læta sunt funera adeo ut exemtos gaudio prosequantur.' Hanc sententiam Euripides in Cresiphontem suam transtulit."

dead man is being mourned, is clear from what follows. אבל, is generally used of mourning for the dead. הוא, "this" namely, that one is mourned for, that one dies. The commentary to the words—"and the living takes it to heart"—we find in Psalm xc. 11, 12. From the contemplation of death we recognise "the power of the anger of God," and by this knowledge we are led to regard with due earnestness the sin which called forth such anger. The relation of this verse to the preceding is as follows: Great, in truth, are the sufferings of this life, as Israel must now, through painful experience, acknowledge, but for him who knows how rightly to use them, they will bear rich fruit. Israel was then in the house of mourning, their heathen tyrants were in the house of feasting: (compare chap. x. 19, where a description is given of their wanton revels.) But, if they only know the time of their visitation, the happiness is on their side, not on that of their oppressors. If, in their mournful circumstances, in the devastations which death had already made amongst the people of God, they see the divine anger against sin, they will gain a "wise and understanding heart" which is itself the highest blessing on earth and the condition of all other blessings. Times of misfortune are times of happiness for the church. Melancthon says—"In rebus secundis fiunt homines negligentiores, minus cogitant de ira dei et minus expectant auxilium dei, deinde fiunt et insolentiores, confidunt sua industria, sua potentia et facile impelluntur a diabolo. Ideo ex illo fastigio postea ruunt in magnas calamitates, juxta illud: tolluntur in altum ut lapsu graviore ruunt. Et contra ærumnæ sunt commonefactiones de nostra infirmitate, et de petendo auxilio dei. Et sunt frenum multarum cupiditatum. Ideo ecclesia subjecta est cruci."

Ver. 3. With regard to כעס, "anger, indignation, chagrin," not "sorrow," compare what is said in Psalm vi. 8; x. 14. Anger is here recommended: in verse 9, it is condemned. The indignation which is usually called forth by sufferings, is at once good and evil—*good* when it is directed against one's own sin; *evil* when it is directed against God and the instruments of His righteousness. Compare Lamentations iii. 39, "Wherefore do the people murmur thus in life? Each one murmurs against his sin." The anger which is here recom-

mended is in substance, in essence, repentance. It leads to the confession, "We, we have sinned and been rebellious: therefore hast thou not spared," (Lamentations iii. 42). רע פנים which signifies strictly—"the badness of the countenance"—is used in the sense of "sadness" only in one other place, namely, in Nehemiah ii. 2, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart," רע לב. Countenance and heart are put in contrast with each other there also, but in such a way that the condition of the latter is known from that of the former; whereas here the heart wears a different look from that of the countenance. יטב when used of the heart, means always "to be joyful, merry." This merriness, however, is one which arises from *improvement*. By the contrast drawn between the countenance and the heart we are told, that sadness sits more on the surface, takes possession of the outworks, whilst on the contrary peace and joy reign within. The happiness which the world gives causes the countenance to be radiant, but leaves the heart in an evil state. True joy is only there where the heart stands in a right relation to God and His commands. Inasmuch, therefore, as suffering helps to put us into such a relation:—as the Berleburger Bible says—"God's image is often formed in suffering"—it is a means of attaining to true joy. In consonance with this passage the apostle says in 2 Corinthians vi. 10—ὡς λυπούμενοι, ἀεὶ δὲ χαίροντες: and further also in 2 Corinthians vii. 10—ἡ γὰρ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον κατεργάζεται. If suffering works repentance it must also make joyful: for the heart becomes glad so soon as it is in its true and normal condition.

Ver. 4. *The heart of the wise*, that is, of the genuine members of the kingdom of God, *is in the house of mourning*, that is, the wise stay willingly, gladly, there. The *willing* assumption of the cross distinguishes the children of God from the world. They are able to call the cross, "dear cross!" Whereas, to the world, suffering is a horror and an abomination. Jerome institutes a comparison here with the beatitude of the πενθοῦντες in Matthew v. 4. The sorrowful, however, are such as have their hearts in the house of mourning. Others drive it out of their minds and seek relief in dissipations.

Ver. 5. *Better is it to hear the rebuke of the wise*, as Israel

was now compelled to hear the voice of its prophets, reproaching it with its sins on the ground of its misery. The rebuking wise man is set before us for example in Malachi, whose prophecies bear the inscription, "the burden of the word of the Lord," and further in this book also (compare chap. iv. 17; v. 5). That the rebuke found its point of departure in the suffering of him who was its object, and that in fact the rebuke was a kind of commentary on the suffering, was perceived even by S. Schmidt, who says, "intelliguntur sermones, qui a sapiente in domo luctus habentur." *Than a man who hears the song of fools.* The man must be conceived as himself also singing, as in fact, a member of a merry society of the children of this world. The Persians were at that time, the singing fools. That a distinction is to a certain extent made here between *the man* and *the fools*, would lead us to conclude that the thought is the following,—that Israel, although in suffering and compelled to submit to rebukes, is better off than if it luxuriated with the world in pleasure and mirth.

Ver. 6. The words—*For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools*—are based on Psalm cxviii. 12, where Israel, being under the rule of the Persians, says—"They (the heathen) compassed me about like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns: in the name of the Lord will I destroy them." Between the happiness or good fortune of the heathen and the fire of thorns, the point of comparison is that both alike violently blaze up, and are quickly extinguished. In the fundamental passage just quoted we find אש קוצים. Here סירים is chosen because of the play on the word: like the play between שמן and שם in ver. 1, where a passage found ready to hand in Proverbs is made somewhat more concise and pointed. More point is perhaps gained also by the description of the happiness of fools as laughter. Between crackling and giggling there is a certain similarity of sound; there is significance therefore in the designation, "the *voice* of thorns." *Under the pot*, which J. D. Michaelis considered intolerable, serves to render the description more vivid and real, because thorn fires were usually made in such a position. See Psalm lviii. 9, "Before your pots can feel the thorns:" where thorns are evidently used for making a fire under the pots. *And also this*, namely, the laughter of fools, the happiness of the heathen, *is vanity*, like so much else in this world of illusions, and is

consequently not a fit object of envy. Considered more carefully Israel is happier than the heathen world, "for the exultation of the wicked is short, and the joy of the impious is but for a moment. Though his greatness mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he perishes for ever like his own dung, and they which see him say—where is he?" (Job xx. 5, 7). The words, "this also is vanity," have been historically fulfilled and confirmed in the utter and complete disappearance of the Persian monarchy, whereas Israel still blooms and flourishes on in the Christian Church. Luther remarks—"Virgilius says, fire in the stubble crackles very much, but has no force, contains no heat, and is soon extinguished. So also is the laughter and the mirth of fools: it looks as if it would last for ever, and blazes up high, but is nothing at all. One moment they have their consolation; the next comes a misfortune which casts them down to the ground: and so all the joy lies in the ashes. This, therefore, accords admirably with that which was said shortly before, "and this also is vanity." The joy and false worldly consolation of the flesh do not last long, and all such joy ends in sadness and evil."

Ver. 7. The reason is here assigned why the happiness of fools is so short. They work their own ruin. Sin deprives them of their understanding, and when that has vanished destruction cannot be far off. First the *mens sana* is lost, and then follows ruin. First the soul dies out, and afterwards the body is cast on the flaying ground. Parallel is Proverbs xv. 27, "he that is greedy of gain destroyeth his own house, and he that hateth gifts shall live." *For oppression maketh the wise man mad.* עשק, "oppression," as exercised by the Persian tyrants (Psalm lxii. 10). Oppression *befools, makes mad:* every tyranny has a demoralizing influence on him who wields it; it deadens all higher intelligence, and takes away consequently the preservative against destruction. "The wise man" here is not one who is still such, but who ought to be, and might be, and has in part been such. "The wise man"—so might the Persian still be designated at the time of Cyrus. *And a gift destroyeth the heart.* Under oriental tyrannies everything was to be had for presents. According to the parallel, "befools, makes mad," the *heart* is brought under con-

sideration as the seat of the understanding: compare Jeremiah iv. 9, "and it shall come to pass at that day that the heart of the king shall perish and the heart of the princes," that is, they shall lose their prudence, their power of reflection.

Ver. 8. *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning:* The thought is quite correctly presented by Melancthon, "Quamquam enim multa patienda sunt tamen vincit tandem causa honesta:" "All's well that ends well," and whoso laughs the last, laughs the best. This is assuredly very consolatory for the people of God, for the end belongs to them so certainly as God belongs to them. The proposition is here expressed generally, that whoso has the end of a thing in his favour, for whomsoever the end of a business turns out well, is better off than he to whom the beginning belongs. The commencement of that which is here treated of was on the side of the heathen world, for in the present Israel served, and the heathens ruled. By *the end* we must understand a *fortunate happy end*, inasmuch as a bad end cannot be called an end at all. So also on the same subject in Psalm xxxvii. 37, 38, "mark the pious and behold the upright man, for a future has the man of peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together, the future of the wicked will be extirpated:" the meek man *has* an end, a future: whereas the wicked who are swept away in the half of their days, (Psalm lv. 23,) are violently robbed of their end or of their future. So also Proverbs xxiii. 17; Jeremiah xxix. 11,—"for I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an *end* and hope." The main passage in which an end is denied to the heathen is Numbers xxiv. 20, where it is said of Amalek,—"his end is destruction." "Behold, the end of the heathen is a wilderness, a dry land and a desert" says Jeremiah in chap. l. 12. The formula with which the prophets open their proclamations of redemption is based on the idea that only the beginning of the times belongs to the heathen world, the end on the contrary to the people of God. *Better is the patient in spirit than the proud in spirit.* Between רוח ארך, which occurs only in this place, and ארך אפים, *βραδὺς εἰς ὀργήν* (James i. 19,) there is no difference, as is evident from the fact that its contrast in ver. 9 is *Anger*, כעס. Accordingly, we must understand by "patience of spirit" the opposite of

"passionate excitement," which bursts forth against God in times of suffering and leads to arbitrary endeavours to help oneself. The patient in spirit is the true Israelite: the heathen is the proud in spirit. The former is better off, for the patient man has the end as his portion: pride on the contrary either comes before a fall or is unable to avert it. If Israel have the end on their side, all they can do is to wait; and he who can wait till the end must certainly attain redemption, (compare Lamentations iii. 24 ff.) As the heathen power has no future it can effect nothing, notwithstanding all its pride.

Ver. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry.* The *anger or wrath* is to be conceived as directed against God and the evil doers favoured by Him, that is, in this present case, against the heathen; compare Psalm xxxvii. 1, 2, 8. *For anger resteth in the bosom of fools,* who only look at the present and at once fall into error with regard to God and his providence if things go otherwise than in their view they ought to do. It is folly to fix the attention only on that which lies directly before our eyes, to speak wisdom in presence of the good fortune of the wicked: "as grass shall they be cut down, and as the green herb shall they wither," and, "evil doers shall be rooted out, but they that wait on the Lord shall possess the land." If we only do not make haste to be angry, the Lord will in his own good time remove all occasions to wrath out of the way. As the Berleburger Bible says: "blessed, on the contrary, is he who in all the events of life maintains a calm patience, equips himself with a spirit of humble submissiveness and magnanimous contentment, accommodates himself to good and evil times alike, and ever derives strength and quickening from the petition,—"thy will be done."

Ver. 10. *Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these,* meaning, "why is it so, how is such a downfall of His people consistent with the love and righteousness of God?" Luther's remark, which starts from the view that the words were directed against the "laudatores temporis acti,"—"Say not thou, it has been better; for it has never gone right everywhere in the world,"—overlooks the force of the expression, "what is it, that, *why,* is it so?" Those whom the author had in view are described in ver. 16

of the Epistle of Jude, as γογγυσταί, μεμψίμοιροι. The contemporary Malachi introduces them in chap. ii. 17, as speaking: "Ye weary the Lord with your words, and yet ye say, wherein do we weary Him? When ye say, every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment?" So also in chap. iii. 14, 15, "ye say, it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we keep his ordinance and walk in filth before the Lord of Hosts. And now we call the proud happy, (that is, the heathen,) built up, (that is fortunate,) are the workers of iniquity, they tempt God and notwithstanding escape." *For with wisdom thou dost not inquire concerning this.* The wise man sees in the sufferings of the people of God the deserved punishment of their sins, and says, "It is the goodness of the Lord that we are not utterly lost, but the Lord does not cast off for ever, he has compassion again according to his great kindness." Wisdom at the same time recognises that afflictions are only temporal, *and* that temporal tribulations have a good *foundation.* Here, therefore, wisdom appears as the soul of patience.*

CHAPTER VII., 11-12.

Koheleth proceeds now to comfort Israel, by directing their thoughts to the treasure of wisdom left to them, which was a pledge of the restoration of that which had been lost. It is impossible that a people which can claim wisdom as its own possession should be for ever subjected to death.

Ver. 11. *Wisdom is good as an inheritance, and still better for those who see the sun.* Ver. 12. *For in the shadow of wisdom in the shadow of silver; but the excellency of knowledge is, Wisdom giveth life to him that hath it.*

Ver. 11. The words "wisdom is good," take up again the מחכמה of ver. 10. The mention of wisdom there occasions the

* Cartwright says, "Prov. iii., eodem modo patientiam sapientiæ appellatione describit. Nam cum v. 11, 12, ad patientiam in perferendis dei castigationibus cohortatus fuisset, v. 13, ad corroborandam hanc adhortationem subjungit, beatum esse qui sapientiam assecutus sit et Jac. i., ad patientiam exstimulans v. 5, subnectit, sapientiam hanc a deo ei petendam esse qui illa destituitur."

writer to seek to impress the soul of Israel with the excellence of the possession which still remains. To the word *inheritance* corresponds the word *silver* in ver. 12. It is consequently the *property*. As regards that, the children of Israel were at a decided disadvantage compared with the world. They were bondsmen in the land which the Lord had given them, and strangers devoured its produce; they were drained by their heathen tyrants, they were an impoverished people. For the inexperienced this must have been a source of severe temptations.* Against such assaults, Koheleth here offers a ground of consolation.† He reminds them that they still have a great advantage over others in the wisdom which is a privilege of the people of God, which can be found nowhere on earth but only in God, (Job xxviii; James i. 5,) and in His word and law: compare Deuteronomy iv. 5-6, "Behold I teach you statutes and judgments, as the Lord my God commanded me: and ye shall hold and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations:" also in Proverbs i. 7, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:" further, chap. ii. 6, "the Lord giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;" compare lastly, chap. v. 18, "rejoice in the wife of thy youth," where by the wife of youth we are to understand *wisdom* which had stood in the very closest relation to Israel from the first commencement of his existence, and chap. ii. 16, where *folly* is brought forward as the strange woman, the foreigner. We may not follow the example of the Septuagint and Vulgate, and explain—"wisdom is good united with possessions." Such a rendering would not be consistent with the posture of affairs at this time, when Israel was destitute of possessions, and with ver. 12, which represents wisdom and money as having different owners. The word עם rather expresses the idea that wisdom may enter into competition, or take rank, with property: and then with increased

* Melanchthon, "Scit ecclesia alias esse causas necis Abel et alias necis Absalomis. Sed homines sine doctrina ecclesiæ turbantur his exemplis, ut dubitent de providentia.

† This point of view is recognised also by Luther; he observes, "here Solomon closes the admonition which he had given, to *strengthen* and to *comfort* those who were in danger of being *impatient* because of the wickedness of the world."

force יותר adds that, in fact, wisdom excels property. יותר is properly a participle, and occurs in the sense "over, remaining," in 1 Samuel xv. 16, and in chap. xii. 9 of this book. Elsewhere it is always used as an adverb, in the sense of "more, very, too, too much, besides, moreover." So in chap. ii. 15; vi. 8-11; vii. 16; xii. 12. יותר never signifies "advantage, gain." The meaning "more" is required further by the argument advanced in ver. 12, where the justice of its application to wisdom is more carefully pointed out. In Proverbs iii. 14, also, wisdom is represented as *better* than silver and gold.* The children of men are described in chap. vi. 5; xi. 8 also, as "those who see the sun."

Ver. 12. This verse is to be explained as follows,—"for, (if one is) in the shadow of wisdom, (one is also) in the shadow of money, not less safe than when one is protected by money." Threatening dangers may be averted quite as often by wisdom as by property. The reason is thus given for setting wisdom on an equality with property (ver. 11). Rightly Symmachus, *σκέπει σοφία ὡς σκέπει τὸ ἀργύριον*: falsely the Vulgate, "sicut enim protegit sapientia sic protegit pecunia." Because shadow affords protection against heat,—one of the greatest plagues of eastern countries,—it is used frequently as an image of protection in general, and with the greater fitness since all tribulations are represented under the figure of heat.—In the second clause the reason of the use of the term "more" in respect to wisdom (ver. 11) is assigned. חַיָּה does not signify "to keep in life," a thing which would fall under the category of shadow, and which gold also in certain circumstances is capable of, but "to quicken, to call back to life." Israel had then fallen into the hands of death, but the treasure which they still retained, that wisdom from above which still dwelt amongst them, was the pledge of a joyful *resurrection*. Wisdom quickens, gives life, because the grace of the living and life-giving God rests on the wise man. The principal passage on this subject is Deuteronomy xxxii. 39, where, in regard to Israel's restoration after severe tribulations, it is said, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I will heal." In the Psalms we

* Correctly Rambach: hac voce (יותר) comparatio sapientiæ, cum hæreditate ita continuatur ut sapientia illi etiam præferatur."

find חיה often used of the restoration to life of Israel when fallen under the power of death, as also of a merely external restoration: for example, Psalm lxxi. 20; lxxx. 18; lxxxv. 6; cxix. 25, "My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word." In Hosea vi. 2, it is said, "he will revive us after two days: on the third he will raise us up that we may live before him." In opposition to the fundamental and the parallel passage, as well as against usage, Knobel explains as follows,—"the advantage of wisdom consists therein, that it gives us a contented and cheerful spirit," Elster, "an inner power, a rich and full spiritual life." Compare besides, Proverbs iii. 18—"She (namely, Wisdom) is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her:" according to which, the life which wisdom gives, is identical with happiness.

CHAPTER VII. 13, 14.

This also was a comfort for Israel, that in their sufferings no less than in their happiness they must recognize the arrangement of God,—one, too, proceeding from well considered counsel.

Ver. 13. *Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?* Ver. 14. *In the day of prosperity be joyful and in the day of adversity: behold, God hath made this even as that, to the end that man should not find anything which will come after him.*

Ver. 13. *Behold the work of God;* most men see it not. In adversity their minds remain fixed on the natural causes,—hence their despair, their passionate excitement, and their futile attempts to help themselves. He who sees God's work attains at once the power of calm self-command and of quiet submission; he says, "I keep silence because thou hast done it," (Psalm xxxix. 9). This summons to consider the work of God is then justified and enforced by a reference to its loftiness and significance: "for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?" (עות, "to make crooked," chap. i. 15; xii. 3). No one can withstand God or alter His determinations. And because no one *can* no one therefore should *wish*

it. We ought to humble ourselves *with joy* beneath the almighty hand of God. For, as the *Almighty* One He is the sum and substance of all wisdom, all love, all righteousness. Almighty arbitrariness is inconceivable.*

Ver. 14. "On the day of good be in the good," that is, be inwardly in a good state when thou art outwardly prosperous, be joyful, בטוב = בלב טוב, chap. ix. 7, compare 1 Kings viii. The explanation, "be prosperous, occupy thyself with it, enjoy it," lays too strong an emphasis on the word היה. *And in the day of adversity behold*, instead of, "then also be thou content, for behold." The correspondence between the two phrases, "in the day of good," and "in the day of evil," plainly implies that what follows will teach, at all events, as to substance, how we ought to be in the day of adversity. This correspondence is unheeded by those who explain the Hebrew, "when misfortune befals thee, consider, weigh," namely, what follows. The words must be punctuated thus—"In the day of adversity, behold;" not, "In the day of adversity behold" —that is, a comma should be inserted after "adversity." Ewald also errs in the same way when he explains, "And the day of adversity look upon, consider it, calmly." To contentment in suffering we must surely be aroused by the consideration that it comes from the same God who sends us our prosperity, as Job says—"do we accept the good from God, and shall we not also accept the evil?" The sender being the same, there must be a substantial resemblance between the various things sent, notwithstanding external dissimilarity. God, when he lays the cross upon us, still remains God, still continues to be our heavenly Father, our Saviour, who has thoughts of peace concerning us; what He does is well done, and however heavily the burden may weigh upon us, it must prove wholesome in the end. But the author is not content with merely directing the mind to the ordering of God whose name is in itself a balsam for the wounds of the heart. He hints also at the motives which dictate the infliction of suffer-

* Cartwright says,—"Avis laqueo capta tanto arctius constringitur, quanto fortius ut se expediat luctatur. Si quis igitur dei laqueo irretitus teneatur, nihil illi tutius est, quam ut se totum dei voluntati permittat, maxime cum in summa illa potentia, qua instructus est, nihil non juste, nihil non sapienter facit, Hi. xxxiv. 12."

ings. God causes evil days to alternate with good ones, *to the end that man should not find anything which will come after him*, that is, in order that he may not be able to fathom anything which lies behind his present condition. (*Afterhim*, so also chap. iii. 23, vi. 12). He is thus made thoroughly little, thoroughly submissive to God: he is thus prevented from setting his heart on transitory sources of happiness. If man cannot be certain of a single day of his life, he must surely be driven to look up to the Lord of life. על דברת which means strictly "on a matter," occurs in the sense "by reason of," in chap. iii. 18; viii. 2; here with a ש following it signifies "by reason that = in order that." With precisely the same force we find די על דברת used in the Chaldee of Daniel ii. 30. Out of Koheleth there is no example in Hebrew of this usage.

CHAPTER VII. 15-18.

At the time of the author bitter complaints were raised that Israel must suffer, despite his righteousness, and that the heathen had the upper hand, notwithstanding their wickedness. He therefore proves that the righteousness which complained so loudly and bitterly because of the denial of its reward, was but another form of ungodliness alongside of a life of open sin; he justifies God's withholding of redemption, and teaches that those whose aim it is to become partakers of salvation must enter on a new way, even that of a true and genuine fear of God. Consolation and admonition here go hand in hand. There was nothing for Israel but to err with regard to his God, and thus sink into the abyss of despair, if he did not attain to a knowledge of the true nature of his fancied righteousness. If he did not learn to murmur against his own sin, he must murmur against God.

Ver. 15. *All things did I see in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that maketh it long in his wickedness.* Ver. 16. *Be not righteous overmuch, neither behave thou all too wisely, why wilt thou destroy thyself?* Ver. 17. *Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou a fool, why wilt thou die before thy time?* Ver. 18. *It is good that thou shouldest take*

hold of this, and also that from that thou shouldst not withdraw thine hand: he that feareth God shall escape from all.

Ver. 15. *All,* is as to substance so much as "of all kinds, various." The word implies that sometimes strange enough things, such too as one would scarcely have looked for, are true quid pro quos. Then follows a remarkable illustration of the curious things one meets with in life. *In the days of my vanity:* so Solomon describes the days of his life, because ever since the fall human existence has been subjected to vanity. This vanity is specially to be recognised in that which is adduced directly afterwards;—namely, that so frequently a righteousness worked out with great labour produces notwithstanding no fruit. Several interpreters have been of opinion that ב in the words בצדקו and ברעתו is the causative ב, and that the sense consequently is, "*through* his righteousness, *through* his wickedness." In support of their view they appeal to ver. 16, where righteousness is represented as the *cause* of destruction —"Why wilt thou destroy thyself?" The word ברעתו, in the sense—"through his wickedness," finds its explanation in the fact, that the Persian secured the stability of his rule by a wickedness, which esteemed all means to be good that served his ends. But that we must rather explain "in, with, along with his righteousness, or his wickedness," ב being often used of the accompanying circumstances (Ewald, § 217, f. 3), is evident, because the writer's intention is to advance a fact patent to the world,—"I saw":—Such a fact was, the union of righteousness and adversity, of wickedness and prosperity; not so, however, that in righteousness lay the cause of adversity, and in wickedness, the cause of prosperity. This is decided further by paralled passages in the contemporaneous Malachi, which exhibit a remarkable agreement with this verse—passages wherein Israel complains that he is unfortunate, *notwithstanding* his righteousness, and that the heathen or the heathenish tyrants are prosperous *notwithstanding* their wickedness. Compare chap. ii. 17—"Ye weary the Lord with your words, and ye say, wherein do we weary him? When ye say: Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment?" further, also, chap. iii. 13-15, "Ye do me violence with your words saith the Lord, and ye say, what do we

speak then against thee? Ye say, it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we keep his ordnance, and walk in filth before the Lord of Hosts." (The righteous perisheth in his righteousness). "And now we count the proud happy, built up are the workers of iniquity, they tempt God, and *notwithstanding* escape:"—the זדים, "the proud," that is, the heathen tyrants, corresponding to "the wicked," in this place. From these parallel passages we deduce the conclusion that under "the righteous," Israel is tacitly referred to, under "the wicked," the heathen; and that the problem here discussed is the one so frequently and variously discussed and illustrated by Koheleth, namely, the sufferings of the people of God at the period of its oppression by the powers of the world, and specially under the yoke of the Persians. האריך signifies in 1 Kings iii. 14, "to lengthen;" elsewhere it is undeniably employed in the sense of "to last long, or, to abide." So in Deuteronomy v. 16, "in order that thy days may *last long*:" chap. vi. 2; xxv. 15. Numbers ix. 19, 22; and Koheleth viii. 12. There is no omission of ימים in the case, for even where it occurs, it is nothing more than the so-called *accusat. relativ.*: so in Deuteronomy xxii. 7, "And that thou mayest last long in respect of days." Allusion is here made to the promise of long duration for the people of God given in the Pentateuch. That which in God's word is spoken to His people by way of encouragement becomes, as things actually are, a ground of complaint against them with the heathen.—If the righteous man perisheth notwithstanding his righteousness, there must be a *fault* therein, and to point out that fault is the aim of the present section. We must not take the righteousness as merely imaginary; nor is the righteous man here spoken of one who deems himself righteous without reason. Even in Luke v. 32, where the Lord says οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους, ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν, the righteous are not merely such as fancy themselves to be righteous. But in the righteousness of the Pharisees, as it existed in the time of the author, there was a double fault. I. They laid a one-sided stress on the mere external accordance of their actions with the law of God, whereas the heart also was claimed and in the original record of that law, the evil word of the mouth, and the evil desire of the heart, are no less forbidden than the evil action. They failed to

see that the law is *spiritual* (Romans vii. 14), that a man may, for example, give all his goods to the poor, and yet if he do it not from the impulse of love, he may be very far from true righteousness (1 Corinthians xiii. 3). Everything, even in the law itself, is repeatedly and expressly reduced back to *love*, (compare Romans xiii. 10). II. They laid a one-sided stress on righteousness, forgetting that all human righteousness is characterised by imperfection, that the righteous man is at the best but a poor sinner. The first fault is closely connected with the second. If we empty righteousness of all deeper significance, it is easy to come to imagine ourselves to be absolutely righteous: such a fancy, however, disappears as soon as we consider more narrowly τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου (Matthew xxiii. 23). In relation to publicans and whores the Pharisees were really righteous; so also the Jews in relation to the heathen: but in many respects the righteous, οἵτινες οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσι μετανοίας (Luke xv. 7), are worse than open sinners, because they do not see the need of repentance and regeneration, because they are filled with pride and presumption and are universally inclined to judge others, and so forth. Those who in one sense are actually righteous, in another sense are only fancifully righteous, reputedly righteous, righteous in their own eyes (Job xxxii. 1). The nature of such a false righteousness shows itself in a peculiarly mischievous manner in days of severe suffering. It is mainly at the bottom of discontent with God's leadings, and may very easily end in fatal error with regard to God, and an utter loss of Him.* The world presents a very perverted appearance. But when we examine more closely into *righteousness*, and into the *end of the wicked*, astonishment vanishes and we see that all is orderly. Even Isaiah proves (chap. lviii.) that a pretended righteousness cannot lay the same claims as the true, and teaches that the latter will at once be followed by deliverance.

Ver. 16. One is righteous overmuch, when one forgets one's own sinfulness, which calls for repentance, and when the prayer, ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρταλῷ, (Luke xviii. 13,) which ought

* Following the example of Seb. Schmidt, Rambach observes: "Præceptum de fugienda impatientia adhuc continuari, ita ut occupetur perniciosissima opinio de propria justitiæ et sanctitate, quæ homines sub difficultatibus et adversitatibus maxime reddit impatientes."

to express its prevailing feeling during this earthly life, dies out in the soul. Behind the *plus* of such a pretended righteousness there lies concealed, a miserable *minus*. In Matthew v. 20, the Lord says—"unless your righteousness be *better* than that of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." To the admonition, "be not righteous overmuch," Luke xviii. 11 forms the commentary: ὁ φαρισαῖος σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ταῦτα προσηύχετο, ὁ Θεὸς εὐχαριστῶ σοι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὥσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἅρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης: Acts xxvi. 5, may also be compared, where Paul describes Pharisaism as the ἀκριβεστάτη αἵρεσις τῆς ἡμέτερας θρησκείας. That the righteousness in which as to substance we are not to do too much, is one characterised by great defects, that further the author has not the least intention of recommending moral laxity, is clear even from the parallel admonition—"be not wise overmuch"—that is, behave not as such, do not make a loud profession of wisdom, do not employ all means in order to be considered a wise man, like those who are said in Matthew xxiii. 7, to love καλεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, Ῥαββί Ῥαββί. Except here, the Hithpael form of חכם, occurs only in Exodus i. 10, where it denotes "sapientem se gessit." Elsewhere the Hithp. of שמם means always "to be alarmed, frightened, to be inwardly troubled:" here, on the contrary, it means "to be outwardly disturbed," and "to destroy." The signification of the mere word is the same. In Kal also are the meanings of "to be outwardly disturbed," and "to be disturbed in spirit," of "vastatus, desolatus est," and "stupuit," connected with each other. But in what sense does a one-sided handling of righteousness and wisdom produce disquiet? Had merely the words—"be not righteous overmuch," preceded, an exaggerated asceticism might be supposed to be referred to: but this idea is prevented by the other admonition, "be not overwise." What we must understand, therefore, is the divine curse which it draws down on itself by such perverted courses. Here we have the germ of the woe denounced by the Lord in Matthew xxiii. against the Pharisees, and pharisaically disposed people, and of the detailed threatenings which follow the often repeated woe! Ver. 38 contains words corresponding most closely to the question,

"why wilt thou destroy thyself?"—namely, *ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος.*

Ver. 17. *Be not overmuch wicked:* a little follows, alas! of itself, in man, who is born and conceived in sin, and whose thoughts and doings are evil from his youth upwards. According to ver. 20, there is not on earth a just man who doeth good and sinneth not. So much the more earnestly, therefore, should we be on our guard against crossing the border-line which separates the righteous man who is still subject to weakness and sin, from the sinner; so much the more carefully should we watch lest we get amongst the number of the *ἅρπαγες ἄδικοι, μοιχοί,* lest we fall into the evil company described in Psalm i. 1; so much the more earnestly should we strive to avoid the "path of the destroyer," (Psalm xvii. 4,) into which we may be so easily enticed if we do not walk with fear and trembling. *Why wilt thou die before thy time?* The wicked may indeed *make it long,* when it is God's will to use him as an instrument for the accomplishment of wise and holy purposes, (ver. 15,) but judgment will notwithstanding come. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, and the years of the wicked are shortened," (Proverbs x. 27:) "Men of blood and of deceit shall not live out half their days," (Psalm lv. 24.) The Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Persian were compelled one after another to experience this.

Ver. 18. *It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this, and also that from that thou shouldest not withdraw thine hand:* "this," namely, not to be a *righteous* man in that condemnable sense, which was the specifically Jewish disease: "that," namely, not to lead a *life of sin,* which was specifically the disease of heathens; and was shared by all those who, having wandered into error concerning the God of Israel, now gave themselves up to heathen tendencies. Both alike must be carefully avoided: both alike are robberies of our gracious God, and both involve us in the judgments of the Righteous One. The Lord refers to these words in Matthew xxiii. 23. And from the words employed by Him in His rebuke of the Pharisees, viz., *ταῦτα δὲ ἔδει ποιῆσαι κἀκεῖνα μὴ ἀφιέναι,* we may judge that He regarded this passage as a reproof of the Pharisaic tendency then in germ. *Whoso feareth God escapes all that,* that is, al. these dangerous things, the destruction which threatens on all

hands. יצא with the accusative signifies "to go out of, or from, anything;" for example, יצא את העיר, "to go out of the city," then בָּנַי יְצָאֻנִי, "my children leave me," (Jeremiah x. 20:) here it is used in the sense of "escape." By the fear of God we escape on the one hand the danger of Pharisaism, because firstly, it awakens in the heart a dread of all attempts to deceive God by the trappings of a heartless show of piety; and because further, an energetic knowledge of sin is inseparably bound up with a true fear of God, (Isaiah vi. 5:) We escape, also, on the other hand, the danger of a life of sin, because we cannot really fear God without having also a keen dread of offending Him by our sins, (Genesis xxxix. 9,) and a lively wish to walk in the ways of His commands.

CHAPTER VII. 19, 20.

The good still retained by Israel, namely, wisdom, which, as an inalienable possession, accompanied the people of God even into the depths of their sufferings, (ver. 11.) is of greater value than the power which is on the side of the heathen world. For human sinfulness inevitably involves him in divine judgments who lacks wisdom. Wisdom, on the contrary, as was declared in ver. 13, gives life to him that hath it. For a parallel see, besides chap. vii. 12, 13, also chap. x. 14-18.

Ver. 19. *Wisdom is strong for the wise more than ten mighty men who are in the city.* Ver. 20. *For there is not a just man upon earth that did good and sinned not.*

Ver. 19. עזז signifies not "to strengthen," but "to be strong." Wisdom is strong for the wise, proves itself strong for his best interests. We must think of the *mighty men* as attended by their *hosts.* In respect of mere power heathendom had then an infinite superiority.

Ver. 20. *For there is—sinned not:* hence the necessity for wisdom as a corrective. He who lacks wisdom will inevitably be guilty of that which will involve him in divine judgments. But only in the midst of Israel has it its abode: in the heathen world folly has pitched its tent, (Deuteron.

xxxii. 21.) In this fact is the pledge that Israel will finally be exalted to universal dominion.

CHAPTER VII. 21, 22.

The point of departure here also, is the misery of the people of God. In times of severe suffering it is of great importance to recognise that affliction is punishment which sin has merited. Light is then thrown on the otherwise dark providence of God: it stills also the tumults of the soul and awakens hope. When we see the footsteps of God in our tribulations, we gain a living confidence in his compassion.

Ver. 21. *Also take not to heart all words which they speak, so that thou mayst not hear thy servant when he curses thee.* Ver. 22. *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.*

Ver. 21. That this saying has a political reference is indicated by the word גם, "also." It shows that the same subject is being handled as before, to wit, the sufferings of the people of God, only from a new point of view. In accordance with this גם the Septuagint translation runs—οὓς λαλήλουσιν ἀσεβεῖς, that is, "the godless, the heathen," (see Isaiah xxv. 2, 5; 1 Maccabees iii. 15; ix. 73; Suidas—ἀσεβεῖς οἱ πολυθέϊαν ἢ ἀθέϊαν θρησκεύοντες.) The heathen tyrants mocked the miserably reduced Israelites because of their pretensions to be the people of God; they said to them constantly—"where is now thy God?" Their hatred, moreover, was stirred up by the presumption of the Jews, seeming, as it did, to judge by results, to judge by their actual condition, to be utterly groundless and sheer impudence. The nature of their speeches we may ascertain more closely from the words, "thy servant." The children of Israel let the heathen see that they looked upon them as, according to God and right, *servants;* and this provoked them. *So that thou mayst not hear,* as thou certainly wouldest, if thou shouldest give thine heart to it; which is as much as to say, "and avoid hearing therefore." If we turn our heart away from that which we perceive with the outward ear, it is as if we heard and yet heard not: for what is heard only with the outward ear is as good as not heard at all. In

Psalm xxxviii. 14, 15, David says, when describing his patience under the assaults of his foes,—"and I as a deaf man hear not, and I am as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. And I am as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth is no reply." Such is the passionless calm to which every one attains, who sees in everything that befals him an appointment or a judgment of God. *Thy servant when he curseth thee.* The servant of Israel is the *heathen*, here as in chap. x. 7,—"I saw servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." It is implied in the idea of the people of God that it should have dominion over the world. To give up this claim, is to give up itself. A living piety which has not this thought is an impossibility. If the people of God has a low conception of itself, it has at the same time also a low view of its Lord. According to Genesis xlix. 10, "the obedience of the nations" is destined to the Shiloh, who should go forth from Israel. In Exodus xix. 6, Israel is denominated "a kingdom of priests:" and because priests of God who made heaven and earth, they are the legitimate lords of the world. "Thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee," it is said in Deuteronomy xv. 6. According to Deuteronomy xxxiii. 29, Israel is a people "before which its enemies must play the hypocrite, and which shall tread upon their high places." In Deuteron. xxviii. 1, we read—"and it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth:" and in ver. 13, "and the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail, and thou shalt be above and thou shalt not be beneath." Isaiah proclaims, in chap. xlv. 14, "thus saith the Lord, the labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Cushæa and the Sabæans, the men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine, and shall walk after thee; in chains shall they walk and fall down before thee, and make supplication unto thee—only in thee is God, and there is no God besides." At the commencement of his Lamentations Jeremiah complains—"she that should be *queen amongst the heathen* must now serve," and in chap. v. 8,—"*Servants* rule over them, and there is none that doth deliver out of their hand:" on which we have the *annotat. uber.*, "qui nobis po-

tius si pii fuissemus, servire debuissent." The explanation—"that thou mayest not be compelled to hear thy servant curse thee,"—is inadmissible: we must rather render the Hebrew, "that thou mayest not hear thy servant, who curseth thee." No longer to hear that, is the reward of turning away our heart from men, and returning to God. He who is without God in the world has the great torture of being compelled to bear the "killing in his bones" (Psalm xlii. 11). We first become free from this pain when we have learnt livingly to "wait upon God."

Ver. 22. If such is the voice of conscience we must recognise God's chastising hand in that which our enemies inflict upon us. The heart then becomes tender towards those who offend, and can receive their injuries with indifference: this is the necessary and solid foundation of the love of enemies, and of prayer for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. We regard them as instruments of God, servants at once of His righteousness, and of that pitiful love which chastises at the right moment, to the end that it may not be compelled to give us up to death: we say also, "let them curse, for God has commanded it." אשר (where it happened) that, is used here in the sense of "where, there where," as in 2 Samuel xix. 25, and Genesis xxxv. 13, 15. *Others,* especially the heathen, whom Israel had so often wounded to the quick, by his haughty presumption and contempt of their prerogatives.

CHAPTER VII. 23-29.

Reviewing the course which he has pursued, Koheleth finds that although in his struggle for wisdom he has made many a gain, he still despite all remains far from his goal (ver. 23, 24). In his investigations concerning wisdom and folly he arrives at the result that the most dangerous enemy of the human race is *false wisdom* (ver. 25, 26). The difficulty of attaining true wisdom may be estimated from the fact that among men very few indeed have reached it, whilst among women not a single instance is to be found (ver. 27, 28). The reason whereof is, that men are no longer in their origi-

nal normal condition, but have fallen under the dominion of arbitrary and lawless habits of thought (ver. 29).

Ver. 23. *All this I proved by wisdom; I said I will be wise, and it was far from me.* Ver. 24. *Far off is that which became* (ward), *and deep, deep, who can find it out?* Ver. 25. *I turned myself with my heart to know, and to try, and to search out wisdom and thoughts, and to know wickedness as folly, and foolishness as madness.* Ver. 26. *And I find something which is more bitter than death; the woman, which is nets and snares as to her heart, chains as to her hands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, and the sinner shall be taken by her.* Ver. 27. *Behold, this found I, said Koheleth, one after the other finding thoughts.* Ver. 28. *After that my soul still seeketh, and I did not find it; one man found I among a thousand, but among all these, a woman have I not found.* Ver. 29. *And behold, this have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they seek out many inventions.*

Ver. 23. Koheleth having operated a considerable time with wisdom begins now to reflect on his instrument. *All this*—that is, not merely what has immediately preceded, but all that has gone before from the commencement of the book—*I proved by wisdom.* The attempt is to be regarded as a *successful* one in relation to the results set forth: as an *unsuccessful* one in relation to the final aim, which is, absolute wisdom. In connection with all that he accomplished, there remained in the writer's mind the humiliating consciousness that he was still far distant from his goal: ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν (1 Corinthians xiii. 9.) Of all human efforts, however successful and blessed they may be, the words of Phil. iii. 12, always hold good—οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον, ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι.

Ver. 24. *Far off is what became,* or "what is." The preterite היה designates, a past stretching forward into the present. That wisdom cannot reach its aim—see the words, "it remained far from me," of the preceding verse—arises from the difficulty of approaching its object, namely, *that which is* (das Seyende). According to the Book of Wisdom, chap. vii. 17, wisdom is τῶν ὄντων γνῶσις: according to chap. i. 13 of this book, wisdom has to do with all that happens

beneath the sun. If absolute being (das Seyende) is far off, difficult of attainment, unapproachable, then must *wisdom* also necessarily be far off. Parallel is chap. iii. 11: "Man cannot find out all the work that God doeth, neither beginning nor end:"—to the words, "all the work," there, correspond the words, "what is," here: compare also chap. viii. 17, "man cannot find out all the work that is done under the sun . . though a wise man should think to know it, yet he findeth it not." Further may be compared Job xi. 8, where concerning the object of wisdom, namely, the nature and work of God, it is said—"deeper than hell what canst thou know?"—and Romans xi. 33, where we read, ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ. שהיה מה in chap. 1. 9 signifies, as here, "that which was;" in chap. vi. 10, it denotes, "that which is." To be rejected are the divergent explanations, first, of Luther and Stier—"it is far off, what will it be?" then of Ewald—"far off is, what it may be," one cannot rightly see, what —; and lastly of Hitzig, "what is far off and deep," which is inconsistent with the position of the words, and in opposition to chap. i. 9, where, as Hitzig himself is compelled to admit, "היה is itself predicate," whereas here he would make it out to be only copula. What man has to do, and what the Lord his God requires of him, namely, the directly practical, is "no longer far off," since the light of divine revelation has shined into the darkness of human existence (Deuteronomy xxx. 11): rather on the contrary, as Moses says to Israel in ver. 14 of the same chapter, "is this word very *nigh* unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Of this, however, Koheleth does not here speak, but of the knowledge of things, and, in particular, of the deeper understanding of divine providence and God's method with His people on earth. That which in itself is clear seems in many respects dark to man because of his indwelling sin, so that he is unable fully to enjoy the gift of God.

Ver. 25. The words, *I turned myself and my heart,* are set in contrast to a merely *superficial* doing. No result is ever arrived at where ולבי cannot with truth be added. *To seek out wisdom and thoughts:* חשבון, "thought, musing, meditation," (compare chap. ix. 10, where *thought* is con-

nected with *work*, the former being the spiritual element from which the latter proceeds forth) is put in opposition to the blind impulses and passions by which the common man allows himself to be led. That we must render the Hebrew —*wickedness as folly*, and so forth—is clear even from the article in הסכלות. To judge from the parallel passages (chap. i. 17; ii. 12, 13; x. 13) רשע might stand in the place of כסל, and סכלות in place of הוללות. כסל and הסכלות too might be omitted without any material alteration of the sense—*and to know wisdom and folly*—in agreement with the first half of the verse, where the writer speaks merely of the knowledge of wisdom and thoughts. This verse forms merely the *introduction* to verse 26, where the author communicates the important result at which he arrived in the course of his studies on wisdom and folly.

Ver. 26. There can be no doubt that by the *woman* spoken of here, we are not to understand a common prostitute, but an *ideal person*, to wit, *false wisdom*, which kept constantly undertaking excursions and sallies from her proper home, the heathen world, into the territory of the Israelites. It does little honour to the exegesis of the present day that it has so frequently mistaken this plain and evident truth. The feeling for the allegorical element in Scripture is still, alas! very little developed; and a false occidental realism largely prevails no less amongst certain orthodox, than amongst rationalistic interpreters. A woman in the common sense does not suit the connection: whereas the ideal does. Before and afterwards Koheleth speaks of the great difficulty of attaining to true wisdom. The ground whereof is specially that alongside of the wisdom that is from above, the σοφία ἄνωθεν κατερχομένη, there is a fleshy wisdom, the ἐπίγειος, ψυχική, δαιμονιώδης (James iii. 15), which entangles men in her snares and is the mother of the "inventions" alluded to in ver. 29. Then further, it must be remembered, an ideal female person, namely, Koheleth the Assembling One, is here speaking: and if this person warns us against another female, as the most dangerous enemy of the human race, we may reasonably presume that the latter is also ideal. But what is quite decisive in favour of the view now advocated is, that it alone enables us to account for the feminine connection of the word Kohe-

leth, which occurs nowhere else in the whole book. Everywhere else, the reference to the incarnation of the wisdom which is from above in the person of Solomon gave rise to the masculine connection; here, however, a change is made on account of the opposition in which wisdom is set to philosophy and wanton seduction. And finally there can be no doubt that the woman here is identical with the (female) "stranger," the "foreigner," who is introduced in Proverbs as the dangerous foe of true wisdom: this can be the less questioned, since, as has been already shown, Koheleth refers back to Proverbs. But now there are strong grounds for thinking that the woman of the Proverbs is the personification of heathenish folly, putting on the airs of wisdom and penetrating into the territory of the Israelites: she is no other than the φιλοσοφία and κενὴ ἀπάτη of Colossians ii. 8, and the ψευδώνυμος γνωσις of 1 Timothy vi. 20, which renewed its old attempts at invasion in the very first beginnings of the Christian Church. The key to Proverbs ii. 16, 17: "to deliver thee from the strange woman, the foreigner which maketh smooth her words; which forsaketh the friend of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God,"—is Jeremiah iii. 4, 20, according to which the friend of youth is no other than the Lord. This Gentile wisdom, so far as it found disciples amongst the people of God, was chargeable with *forgetting* the Lord. In Proverbs v., the evil woman must needs be regarded as an ideal person because of the opposition in which she is set to the *good* woman, Wisdom. Chr. B. Michælis remarks: I. dehortatur a falsi nominis sapientia s. potius μωρίᾳ sub schemate mulieris adulteræ, ver. 1-14; II. Commendat veram sapientiam sub schemate castæ dulcissimæque conjugis, ver. 15-23. In fact, verses 15 and 16 there—"drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets,"—are without meaning on the literal view of them. Bertheau, who adopts the literal view, finds himself in such perplexity that he wishes to alter the text and interpolate a negation—"let them *not* flow abroad." The cistern, the fountain, is the native Israelitish wisdom. Out of that one ought to draw living waters and communicate thereof to the heathen world,

but not busy oneself with *their* wisdom which, more closely inquired into, is *folly*. Further, if wisdom in chap. vii. 4, 5, —"say unto wisdom, thou art my sister, and call understanding thine acquaintance. That she may protect thee from the strange woman, the foreigner, who useth flattering words,"— is an ideal person, her opponent must be so also. In the 9th chapter again the evil woman is put in contrast with wisdom. See Ch. B. Michaelis, who says, "Partes cap. duæ sunt. Describitur enim I. sapientia, missis circumquaque famulis ad epulas a se paratas invitans, ver. 1-12. II. Opposita mulier stultitiæ suas e contrario delicias commendans et offerens, ver. 13-18." The *explanation* is in fact plainly given in the words of ver. 13—"there is a woman of folly, clamorous, who is simple and knows nothing." The woman is personified wisdom. Last of all, in Proverbs xxii. 14, we read—"the mouth of the foreigner is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord falleth therein." That the writer treats here of *doctrines, teachings*, and that foreign doctrines, (seductions always came from foreign countries, as may be seen in the example of Israel in the desert, and then also in that of Solomon himself) are personified as foreigners (female) is clear from the mention of the *mouth*. Nahum iii. 4, presents an analogous instance of such personification. There, Nineveh, the wielder of the world's sceptre, is represented, on account of her arts of deception, as a whore, who plunges the nations into ruin by her seductions. That which is true of heathen *politics*, is true also of heathen *wisdom*, of the philosophy and hollow deceits of the world. To the woman here, corresponds in Revelations ii. 20, "the woman Jesebel, which called herself a prophetess to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." Jesebel there, is a symbolical person, a personification of the erroneous doctrines of the heathen. Against strange teachings and heathenish wisdom, Koheleth warns his fellow-countrymen also in chap. xii. 12. Numerous parallels to the words, "more bitter than death," (Cartwright—"cujus nefariam consuetudinem vel morte redimere utile fuerit,") may be found in Proverbs. See, for example, chap. vii. 26, 27, where it is said of "the stranger," "she hath cast down many wounded, and numerous are her slain. Her house are ways to hell,

going down to the chambers of death :" and chap. ix. 18, " he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell." It is simplest to take לבה as an accusative—" which is nets and snares as to her heart (according to her heart)." *The wisdom of the world offers peculiarly strong temptations in times when the world has the dominion ;* as may be seen in the example of the Maccabæan period.

Ver. 27. *This found I,* namely, that which has been set forth in the previous part of the book (ver. 23). *One for one,* which is as much as, " one by one, one after the other," so that on each occasion he only undertook one subject, and thoroughly investigated that. Compare לאחד אחד, " one after the other " (Isaiah xxvii. 12) and, εἷς καθεὶς (John viii. 9). In this way alone can anything be effected in the struggle for knowledge. As the Berleburger Bible remarks — " knowledge grows by slow degrees." *Finding thoughts :*—in the later usage the infinitive with ל is frequently employed to describe a condition, a state, in this respect resembling the participle, (see Ewald, § 237 c. 280 d).

Ver. 28. The word אשר standing at the commencement indicates that the searching and not finding refer to the matter mentioned in the previous verse, namely, wisdom, speculation. In regard to the word, see Ewald, § 181 b. There is the same correspondence between the words, " my soul still seeketh and I have not found it," and the words in ver. 23,—" I said I will be wise and it was far from me :" as between ver. 27 and the first part of ver. 23. Compare further chap. viii. 17. Many a result has been arrived at, but the full possession of wisdom has not been gained. How difficult that is of attainment is proved by the fact that amongst men only an extremely small number has succeeded, and among women not a single one. The phrase, " one of a thousand," is borrowed from Job xxxiii. 23. Elihu says there that a man who can enlighten his brother on God's ways, one therefore who is in full possession of divine wisdom, is very seldom to be found, is " one among a thousand." The select few of this class consist of such men as Moses, David, Isaiah, the same that the author of the Greek " Wisdom of Solomon," had in view, when in chap. ii. 27, he says of wisdom, κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα φίλους Θεοῦ καί προφήτας κατα-

σχευάζει. Himself the author does not reckon amongst these chosen few, without thereby giving up the claim to canonical authority which he expressly makes at the close of the book. In connection with the declaration—"one woman have I not found under all these," that is, amongst the possessors of wisdom, the fact must be taken into consideration, *that no writing by a woman is to be found in the entire Old and New Testaments.* That which was vouchsafed only to the chosen few amongst men,—and be it remarked that we do not here speak of that general participation in wisdom to which the entire people of God, as "the wise nation," (Deuteronomy iv. 6,) was called, but of an independent, pioneering, and productive possession thereof,—we should not at all expect to be conferred on woman, who is the "weaker vessel," (1 Peter iii. 7.) It lies beyond the degree of woman, whose characteristic is in these respects predominantly receptive, not productive, and whose real sphere of independent action is quite another. Luther says—"Women are created by God for their own kind of work, namely, for the management of the house, and the bringing up of children; and each one of us accomplishes that best to which God has created and called him. A woman lays hold of a child better with her little finger than a man with his two fists. Therefore let each one stick to the work to which he has been called and appointed by God." Nothing but a complete misapprehension, confounding the woman here with the one in ver. 26, when they have nothing whatever to do with each other, could have given rise to such explanations as that of Hitzig—"among a thousand men I found an upright man, but not one good woman." "Uprightness," in Hitzig's sense, is not once treated of in this entire connection. What is discussed is wisdom, the fathoming of the nature of things, of the depths of the Godhead. The author only denies to women, what he does not attribute to himself. But undoubtedly it is not his intention to renounce all claim to the honour of being an "upright," "good" man. Whoever has made himself acquainted with the general features of the Scripture mode of viewing things will at once acknowledge that Hitzig's view is an impossible one. Luther observes, "amongst the heathen there was a saying—tria mala, mala pessima, ignis, aqua, femina, that is, there can be nothing

worse than what these three can do, to wit, fire, water, woman. But these and many of the like sayings against the female sex have been vomited forth by the devil out of pure hatred and venom towards God and His work, meaning in this way to disgust every man with the married state, and with God's word." The practical point of view has been well hit upon and described by Cartwright,—"Quod fœminas admoneat, ut modeste se gerant, et consciæ imbecillitatis suæ caveant, ne sibi et suo ingenio confidant, sed se suis quibus subsunt gubernatoribus regendas et moderandas tradant, et ante omnia Deum sollicite precentur, ut suæ imbecillitatis misertus viribus illos accingat, quibus in officio contineantur."

Ver. 29. But whence does it arise that wisdom is so difficult for man to reach? The fault lies not in God, but in man, whose original nature has degenerated. *God made man upright:* ישר means "upright," (not "sincere," as Luther translates,) and designates the normal state, the state which is in adequate correspondence with the divine standard. Were man still in the condition in which he was created, wisdom would be easy of approach to him, for the possession of wisdom is part of the normal condition and character of man. *But they sought out many inventions*, (arts.) חִשְּׁבֹנֹת occurs only here and in 2 Chronicles xxvi. 15. There it is used of artfully devised war machines:* and by way of explanation there is added חשב מחשבת that is "devised by the meditative." The word designates here, properly, that which is "thought out," "excogitated," "subtilty," not *malas artes*, such as, "intrigues," "machinations," as Hitzig would explain it. The question in hand relates not to *practice* but *theory*, not to *evil doing* but to perverse *thinking*. The word describes rather those so often plausible and brilliant reasonings of the natural understanding, which perplex the heart and lead away from the wisdom that is from above, those speculations of a heart turned away from God, which are perpetually penetrating into the Church from the world, those βεβήλους κενοφωνίας καὶ ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, against which the Apostle utters his warning in 1 Timothy vi. 20. Since the fall man has forgotten

* Gesenius,—"cf. ingenium, quod media latinitate ballistam pr. machinam ingeniose fabrefactam notat, unde dicebant ingeniare urbem, i. e., machinis oppugnare, ingeniosus, ingeniator, gall. ingenieur."

that he should in the first instance take up a receptive position, in relation to the ἄνωθεν σοφία, and that such a position is the only right one ; but instead of that, he goes hunting after his own phantastic and high-flown thoughts. The only way of throwing off this severe disease, and of escaping from the bonds of one's own thoughts and imaginations, is to unlearn the serpent's lesson—"ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil,"—to return to our dependence on God, to renounce all self-acquired knowledge, and, "leaving all our own fancies and conclusions to sink in Lethe's stream," to accept the divine teachings alone, according to our Lord's saying in Matthew xi. 25,—"I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

CHAPTER VIII. 1-8.

Here too again the point of departure is the mournful condition of the people of God. After an introductory eulogy of wisdom, (ver. 1,) the author admonishes his fellow-countrymen not to allow themselves by any means to be diverted from obeying their heavenly King, or to be seduced to evil courses, seeing that their Lord is *almighty* both in action and in punishment, (ver. 2-4.) If the people of God only continue steadfast in obedience their sufferings will one day be removed from them : men, however mighty they may seem, are far too impotent to be able to hinder the course of the judgments which God at His own appointed time decrees for the good of His children, (ver. 5-8.)

Ver. 1. *Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of things? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the harshness of his face is changed.* Ver. 2. *I; observe the mouth of the king, and that because of the oath of God.* Ver. 3. *Be not hasty to go out of his sight, stand not in an evil thing, for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.* Ver. 4. *Because the word of the king is ruler, and who can say to him, what doest thou?* Ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth the command shall experience no evil thing, and a wise heart discerneth both time and judgment.* Ver. 6. *For every desire of man has a time and right; for the adversity of man is*

heavy upon him. Ver. 7. *For he knoweth not that which shall be, for who can show to him how it will be?* Ver. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit: neither hath he power over the day of death, and there is no discharge from that conflict, nor does wickedness deliver him that hath it.*

Ver. 1. As in chap. vii. 23-28, at the close of a series of wise sayings, the author institutes a consideration of wisdom itself, so also here, at the beginning of a new series of such sayings, he extols the high importance of wisdom, in order to prepare the spiritual ear for the reception of his utterances. *Who is as the wise man?* No one is equal to the wise man: wisdom is the one precious pearl with which no possession on earth can be compared (Job xxviii. 18; Matthew xiii. 45, 46.) The ground of the importance of wisdom is assigned in the words—*and who knoweth the interpretation* (פְּשֶׁר the Hebrew word, occurs only here; elsewhere the Chaldee form פְּשַׁר is used, and that only in Daniel) *of things?* דבר, corresponds to the expression, "that which is," employed in chap. vii. 24 to designate the object of wisdom. Wisdom leads us into the nature, the essence of things, and thus furnishes a basis for right practical conduct. J. D. Michaelis says—"By the solution of things, we are to understand nothing but the explanation of all that which is done in the world and of the design thereof: the evils of the world appear to us like letters without meaning, unintelligible; but as soon as we consider their good results, their interpretation will be plain, we shall see why God permits them." The cross, whose dark depths are illuminated by wisdom, is no doubt, according to what follows, a special aspect of the general question which is here principally brought under consideration; but J. D. Michaelis has had it too directly and exclusively in view. The statement of the high advantages of wisdom is continued in the words—*a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine.* By the *illumination of the face* several commentators understand "the instruction and good guidance which wisdom confers on its possessor." That, however, is against usage, according to which the illumination of the countenance can only signify "to cheer, to enliven." The cognate phrase, "enlighten the eyes," means usually "to make

brisk and cheerful:" misery and pain cause the eyes to be dull, gloomy, languid. Compare Psalm xix. 9, where "enlightening the eyes" is set in parallelism with "rejoicing the heart." To the cheering of the countenance has reference the phrase האיר פניו, used of God: God's face *beams, is radiant,* in relation to those towards whom he is gracious. This expression is not elsewhere employed of men; yet in Proverbs xvi. 15, it is said, "in the light of the king's countenance is life." The reason of the joy afforded by wisdom may be found in the insight it gives into the nature of things, specially, into the providence of God; and in the assurance and decision with which, as a consequence, we can regard the practical questions of life. *And the strength of his countenance is changed.* According to usage, "the strength of the countenance," can only mean, "hard and rigid features," as the expression of boldness and impudence. In Deuteronomy xxviii. 50, גוי עז פנים is "a bold and impudent people." In Daniel viii. 23, a king עז פנים is a bold, impudent king. העז פנים or בפנים, "to make the face strong," is used of "boldness, impudence," in Proverbs vii. 13; xxi. 29. Consequently, the rendering, "rage, chagrin at the repugnant circumstances of life," must be rejected as erroneous. Jerome has given substantially the correct view—"Omnis hæreticus et falsum dogma defendens *impudenti vultu* est." So also the Berleburger Bible which says—"In order that the rigidness of his countenance, that is, his savage unfriendly crabbed stubborn nature, his wrinkled forehead and impudent face, may be changed; that man may be no longer so harsh, so difficult of approach, nor be, as hitherto, refractory to human and divine commands. When, through the transforming power of wisdom, a heart of flesh has taken the place of the heart of stone, the inward pliancy and docility, the soul's fear of God and his commands, which then follow, become discernible in the *countenance.*"

Ver. 2. The simple "I" standing alone, is as much as, "I counsel thee," or, "wilt thou listen to my advice, then." At first sight the author seems here to be admonishing his fellow-countrymen to obey the *secular authorities,* that is the heathen. Even Jerome remarks, "videtur præcipere juxta apostolum regibus et potestatibus obsequium;" but rightly adds, "this explanation is however to be rejected." Against this explana-

tion there is at the very outset one objection, namely, that scarcely a passage is to be found in the Old Testament where obedience to the heathen tyrants is represented as a religious duty. Jeremiah xxix. 7, is not to be reckoned amongst them. Romans xiii. was written at the time of the dominion of the Romans, and therefore in essentially different circumstances. What the Apostle says there of the authorities, as the guardians of law and right, is inapplicable to oriental monarchies, as is satisfactorily enough proved by this very book. The characteristic which distinguished the Romans from other heathen nations, namely, their sense of justice, is prominently referred to in 1 Maccabees viii. The king here, for whom obedience is claimed is rather the *Heavenly one*, as in chap. v. 8: compare also Psalm xx. 10; v. 3; x. 16. The author intentionally abstains from saying expressly that he means the heavenly king. Wisdom loves to speak in "dark sayings," (Proverbs i. 6). It pursues its aim of sharpening the intellect even at the risk of misunderstanding. But prudence also rendered it advisable not to express himself here more clearly. The mouth being the organ of speech, it stands here for the *words* which proceed from it (compare chap. x. 13). שמר is the standing term employed to denote the observance of the commands of God: compare שמר מצוה in ver. 5. There is a difference between the words here and the phrases usually employed in relation to the heavenly king, *e. g.*, עבר פי יהוה (Num. xiv. 41, and elsewhere), and מרה את פי יהוה (Numbers xx. 24, and frequently besides). *And* (indeed) *because of the oath to God.* A person's oath is, in all cases, either that which he makes (Psalm cv. 9; 1 Chronicles xvi. 16), or which is made to him (Habakkuk iii. 9, where "oaths of the tribes," are oaths which were made to the tribes, promises of God to Israel confirmed by oath, Genesis xxiv. 8; Joshua ii. 17, 20; 1 Kings ii. 43), which therefore belongs to him, either as giver or receiver. Accordingly, in this place, "the oath of God" can only be the oath *which is made to God*, and the explanation, "the oath by God," must therefore be rejected. But this does not prevent the words being referred also to earthly authorities. For in fact every oath *by God* must be looked upon as an oath *made to God*:—one swears to God, to perform this or that thing to this or that man. Compare Exodus xxii. 10—

"the oath of the Lord shall be between them both:"—and 2 Samuel xxi. 7; 1 Kings ii. 43. The subject-matter in hand, however, forbids us referring the words to such an oath of allegiance: we can only think of the oath which bound the people of God to obedience to their heavenly King. Nebuchadnezzar, it is true, made Zedekiah take an oath of faithfulness to himself (2 Chronicles xxxvi. 13): but there is nowhere to be found the slightest trace of an oath taken by the *nation* to its heathen tyrants. To their heavenly King, on the contrary, the Israelites stood notoriously pledged by sacred covenant and oath to obey His laws and commands. In Deuteronomy xxix. 12-15, it is said, "thou shalt enter into the covenant of the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.—Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath: but both with those who are here this day, and also with those who are not here." Ezekiel says, in chap. xvi. 50, to Judah—"I will deal with thee even as thou hast done, which despiseth the oath and breakest the covenant," on which Michaelis remarks, "quo te devovisti paciscens cum deo." It is of special importance, however, to compare a passage which refers to the same period as the one now under notice, and is remarkably allied therewith, namely Nehemiah x. 30, where it is said of the people, "they entered into an oath and *curse* to walk in God's law, which was given by the hand of Moses, the servant of God, and to *observe* (לשמר) and do all the *commandments* (מצות, compare ver. 5) of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes."

Ver. 3. *Be not hasty to go out of his sight;* compare Genesis iv. 16, "and Cain went out from the presence of the Lord;" Jonah i. 3, "and Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord;" and Hosea xi. 2, where מפני הלך is used of apostacy from the living God (John vi. 66). When severe suffering befalls a man he is tempted to turn away from God: compare Job ii. 9, "then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Bless God and die." Job answers thereto—"As one of the foolish women speakest thou. Do we take good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive the evil?" "In all this," we read, "Job sinned not," although his circumstances rendered him exceed-

ingly liable to sin." In chap. xxxvi. 13, Elihu speaks of the "impious, who heap up wrath," when God binds them, that is, when He visits them with heavy sufferings. "Their soul," says he, "dies in youth, and their life is among the degraded." Psalm xxxvii. 1, admonishes us not to "fret ourselves because of evil-doers," and warns us against being seduced into apostacy from the living God, and into wicked courses, by the sight of the prosperity of the wicked and of the power which they wield. "O man, though thy cross press thee without end, though thy sufferings be ever so severe, become not a rebel against God:" thus would the writer address the covenanted people groaning beneath the hard yoke of the heathen world. *Stand not in an evil thing.* Several commentators explain, "remain not therein." But "remain" does not suit the connection. The idea evidently is, that we should not allow ourselves to be seduced by suffering into the paths of sin, into despair of God, into infractions of his sacred ordainments, and endeavours to work out our own deliverance in our strength and way: compare Psalm xxxvii. 8—"cease from anger and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do evil:" on which J. Arnd remarks—"many of them do evil things in wrath, revenge, and impatience, of which they repent in eternity." עמד must consequently be understood here as in Psalm i. 1—"*Stand* not in the way of sinners:" sin is represented as an evil spot on which we should not take our post. *For he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him:* into a worse situation it is impossible to be betrayed, than to make *omnipotence*, in the person of God, our enemy, as we inevitably do when we suffer ourselves to be carried away, by impatience, to evil things, instead of following the counsel, "Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Referred to an earthly king, no satisfactory explanation can be given of this verse. How little even the very first words suit such an application is evident from the frequent attempts which have been made to alter their sense, as, for example, by Knobel: "Be not hasty to *revolt* from him." Very few persons indeed ever got to see the face of an eastern king, and when they did, to go away or to remain, lay not in their choice. "Apud Persas," says Justinus i. 9, "persona regis sub specie majestatis occu-

litur; Xenophon says in his Agesil. ix. 1, *ὁ μὲν Πέρσης τῷ σπανίως ὁρᾶσθαι ἐσεμνύνετο*; according to Aristotle, "de Mundo," the Persian monarch was *παντὶ ἀίρατος*,—compare Esther iv. 11—and on this passage, Baumgarten, "de fide hist. libri Estheræ," 82. Moreover, an Israelite cannot say of an earthly monarch—"he doeth whatsoever it pleaseth him." It would be a denial of God on high. Nebuchadnezzar, it is true, says to Daniel's three companions—"Let us see who that God is that shall deliver you out of mine hand" (Daniel iii. 15): but they answer, "Behold, the God whom we honour is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and out of thine hand, O king, will he deliver us." Overwhelmed by facts Nebuchadnezzar himself was forced to say of Jehovah—"his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation," (Daniel iv. 34).

Ver. 4. *Because the word of the king is ruler.* שלטן is used to denote "ruler" in the Chaldee portion of Daniel: see chap. iii. 2, 3, "all the rulers of the provinces." The rank which they vindicate to themselves belongs, truly regarded, to the word of God. שלטן must be regarded here and in ver. 8 as introduced with the marks of quotation. It is employed *ironically. And who can say to him, what doest thou?* S. Schmidt remarks on Job ix. 12—"est interrogatio in jus vocantis v. auctoritate superiore prohibentis. Describitur enim hic summum dei imperium et independentia a superiore." Knobel is compelled to observe, "The formula which constitutes the second clause is never used except to glorify the divine power." Compare Job ix. 12, "Behold he robbeth, and who shall drive him back, who shall say unto him, What doest thou?" and chap. xxiii. 13, "and he is one, and who shall drive him back; and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." See also the "Book of Wisdom" xii. 12, *τίς γὰρ ἐρεῖ τι ἐποίησας ἢ τίς ἀντιστήσεται τῷ κρίματι σου*; Isaiah xlv. 9; Jonah i. 14.

Ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth the command*, that is, as much as, "whoso standeth not in an evil thing," (ver. 3). מצוה is to be taken as a kind of nomen proprium, signifying, the command absolutely, the divine command; compare שמר מצוה, used in 1 Kings xi. 34, of the observance of the divine commands. *Shall experience no evil thing:* whoso avoids the evil of

guilt, shall be spared the evil of *punishment*. Knobel's explanation ידע "to know," "to make the acquaintance," רע רבר, "of moral culpability," does not suit the second clause. He may fall into great sufferings, as the pious in Israel were now compelled to experience,—by way of consolation for the bearers of the cross are the words spoken—but only into such sufferings as are *blessings*, when more carefully examined, and as shall have a joyous termination: compare Romans viii. 28, *οἴδαμεν δὲ, ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν Θεὸν, πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν*. *And a wise heart discerneth both time and judgment.* According to chap. iii. 1, "the time" can only be the time of the interference of God. "Judgment" consequently must refer to God's exercise of judgment and right. Time and judgment taken together, signify that God will judge at his own time. The meaning of the entire verse is as follows: As certainly as God in his own time shall judge righteously—a thing which is known to the wise heart—so certain is it, that those who hold God's commands, and therefore have God on their side, cannot be really and lastingly unhappy.*

Ver. 6. *For to every desire*—of wise and believing hearts after the establishment of the Kingdom of God,—*there is time and right, because the adversity of man is heavy upon him.* Behind *man* lies concealed the *monarch of the world.* The ground whereof is, that the means of human chastisement in God's hand are very powerful, רב "great," see on chap. vi. 1. With all his power man is still not *independent*, but subject to the heavy blows of fate. Men therefore can oppose no resistance when God proceeds to exercise judgment for the good of His people.

Ver. 7. *For he knoweth not that which shall be:* before one who does not know that, we should not be afraid; to his temporary prosperity we should attach little importance. To-morrow it may be all over with him, however glorious and brilliant is his appearance to-day. If we only have God on our side, we may be calm and contented even in the midst of oppression.

Ver. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit,*

* Cousset. "scit judicium postea venturum certum et inevitabile et ideo patiens est, si injuste a magistratu tractatur, v. si interea, dum summi regis mandata servat, aliquid adversi ei contingat."

to retain the spirit. In this point also the monarch of the world lies hidden behind man. When the hour of death appointed by God comes, he must away. In Psalm cxlvi., which was composed during the time of the Persian dominion, it is said, (ver. 3, 4,) "Put not your trust," (the Psalmist is addressing the world, the great nation,) "in princes, in the son of man, in whom is no help. When his breath goeth forth he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish." Jerome writes—"non est ergo lugendum, si . . . sæpe ab iniquis potentioribus opprimamur, quum morte omnia finiantur, et superbus et potens qui cuncta populatus est, non valeat animam suam retinere quum rapitur." *And there is no discharge in the conflict,* which God carries on with man. When God has once begun the strife with any one, He does not let him free, He does not desist, until He has brought him to ruin. Illustrative of these words is the example of Pharaoh. The *discharge* does not refer so much to the *imprisonment,* as to the strife, the conflict itself: compare Genesis xxxii. 27, where one of the wrestlers addresses to the other the word שלחני, "let me go." *Wickedness delivereth not him that hath it,* notwithstanding that it puts powerful and apparently irresistible means at his disposal. They have only importance until God's time and judgment draw nigh. The Berleburger Bible remarks, "he will not succeed in freeing himself in this matter, as he succeeded in freeing himself from God's law."

CHAPTER VIII. 9-13.

Here also again the author finds the occasion for his utterances in the sufferings of the people of God, in the tyranny with which they were burdened. The consolation, which is offered under a twofold head, (ver. 9 and 10, and ver. 11-13,) is the following—"Look to the end, (Psalm lxxiii. 17,) in good time God's judgment will overthrow the wicked, and exalt the righteous."

Ver. 9. *All this saw I, in that I applied my heart to every history that takes place under the sun: there is a time when man ruleth over men to their misfortune.* Ver. 10. *And then saw I the wicked buried, and they came, and from the*

place of the holy, they went forth. And they were forgotten in the city, who had thus done. This also is vanity. Ver. 11. *Because a sentence is not pronounced, the work of wickedness hasteneth: therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* Ver. 12. *Let a sinner do evil an hundred times and long endure! Yet surely I know that it shall be well with men that fear God, which fear before him.* Ver. 13. *But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither like the shadow shall he long endure, which feareth not before God.*

Ver. 9. *All this,* that is, all that can be classed under the same head as that which is specially mentioned immediately after, and which can be represented thereby;—facts namely, which, when superficially examined may easily prove a stumbling block in the way of *faith* (compare chap. vii. 15.) Jerome says—"Dedi inquit cor meum, ut omne quod sub sole geritur intuerer, et hoc vel maxime, quod homo accepit in hominem potestatem, ut quoscunque vult affligat atque condemnet." The suffix in לו refers of course to the second mentioned man. The present verse sets forth the stumbling block: the following verse shows how it is to be removed. That a hint concerning the latter cannot be contained in the present verse is clear from the word בכן in ver. 10, alone.

Ver. 10. *And then saw I the wicked buried.* ראיתי serves here, as in ver. 9, to render the description more vivid and palpable. It is to be noted that Solomon here speaks, and not the author. They are experiences like those which are alluded to by Asaph in Psalm lxiii., such as took their rise from the conflict between evil and good which raged in the midst of the covenant people itself. In the background however stands the thought: thus will the Persian Empire also one day be borne to the grave. בכן "under such circumstances," or since things are thus situated: as a Hebrew word it occurs, besides here, only in Esther iv. 16. Not to be buried, is frequently represented as a punishment of the godless: compare on chap. vi. 3. The untimely comparison of these two passages has led many commentators into the error of supposing that burial, which, on their own authority they have here converted into an honourable one, (Cartwright, for example, who says, "sepulturam, et illam quidem amplam

et dignitatis plenam consequi, in benedictione dei jure numeratur,") is represented as an advantage enjoyed by the wicked. But the wicked condemned by God are buried in Ezekiel xxxii. 23-24, xxxix. 11, also: so too the godless rich man of the Gospels, (Luke xvi. 22.) *And they came. Whither,* may be learnt from the preceding קברים; namely, *into the grave:* and thus an end is put to all their prosperity, their wealth and their efforts to injure the righteous. *And from the place of the holy went they forth.* יהלכו forms the contrast to באו. They come into the grave and are thus removed from the place where their presence gave such offence. Worthy of note is it that מקום stands in the *stat. constr.* It is not said, "from the holy place," but, "from the place of the holy," that is, the place to which the holy belong: "the holy" must here be regarded as ideal persons. They must leave the place in which their existence and presence is something abnormal. The Holy are the true members of the Church of the Lord, (compare the remarks in my Christology on Isaiah iv. 3.) Parallel is Isaiah lii. 1, "put on thy festival garments, O Jerusalem, thou holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean:" and chap. xlix. 17, "thy destroyers and those that laid thee waste shall go forth of thee." *And they were forgotten in the city, who had thus done.* Compare Proverbs x. 7, "the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot:" also Psalm lxxiii. 19, 20, "how are they brought to desolation in a moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream, when one awaketh, so dost thou in the city despise their image." Many commentators have been led into an entirely mistaken view of the whole verse by the translation—"who have done justice," or, "who have rightly acted." It may still be fairly doubted whether כן ever, as a neuter, signifies "rectum," and adverbially, "recte." In most of the passages adduced in favour of this rendering, the common and therefore the simplest meaning "thus," is plainly the most suitable. Even in the two which seem most in its favour, namely in Numbers xxxvi. 5; xxvii. 7, the translation "thus,"—"*thus* speak they of the tribe of Joseph: *thus* speak the daughters, etc."—is rendered probable by a comparison of Matthew xxvi. 25, and John xviii. 37. When any one who is solicited for

a decision, speaks of the petition as reported or as being inquired into, *consent* is implied. Here, however, in any case must כן be taken in its usual meaning on account of the unmistakable reference to the foregoing בכן. *This also is vanity*, to wit, that man should rule over man to his misfortune,—the doings of tyrants. It is vanity because of the sudden catastrophe which befals it,—vanity because it suddenly comes to nought and ends in horror. In regard to the prosperity of the wicked, of the heathen tyrants, it is said also in chap. vii. 6, "this also is vanity." The Berleburger Bible says, "O how foolish are men not to prove and judge such things more wisely, not to see how vainly they act!" Faith receives here as in Psalm lxxiii. the victory, in that by the grace of God it discerns that the prosperity of the wicked as well as the sufferings of the righteous are only transitory.

Ver. 11. *Because a sentence is not pronounced*—that is, because the heavenly edict is delayed—*the work of wickedness hasteneth:* that is, because they go unpunished the wicked are confirmed in their wickedness: compare Isaiah xxvi. 10, "Let favour be showed to the wicked yet will he not learn righteousness. On the earth, where one should do right, he commits iniquity." פתגם, signifying "word" in general, and then specially "mandate, edict," is probably of Persian origin, and it seems to have been used, as it were technically, for the edicts of the Persian kings: compare Esther i. 20; Ezra iv. 17; vi. 11; Daniel iii. 16. The only passage where the word elsewhere occurs in Hebrew is the one in Esther just quoted: otherwise it is only found in the Chaldee of Daniel and Ezra. Here, as also in Daniel iv. 14, it is then transferred to the decrees of heaven. We must consider it as introduced with signs of quotation. פתגם occurs in connection with עשה in Esther i. 20 also: "the edict of the king which he makes." Since אין means "it is not," נעשה can only be a participle. פתגם is here therefore treated as a feminine. The explanation—"the judgment on the work of wickedness,"—is contrary to the accents: besides פתגם is never elsewhere employed with the genitive of the object, and it is questionable whether it can be so employed. מהרה is properly a noun, signifying "haste:" it is so used in chap iv. 12: see too Psalm cxlvii. 15, במהרה, "in haste." It is best to take it in this sense here

also—"Haste," for, "hasty." The adverb "hastily," might very fitly take the place of the adjective: see Ewald, § 296 d. *Therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil,* in that they are purposed to drive out violence with violence, and, falling into error concerning God, seek to secure prosperity for themselves, by the same means as the fortunate wicked. The "children of men" are those who suffer at the hands of prosperous wickedness, with special reference to Israel as oppressed by the fortunate powers of this world. How the wicked are confirmed in their wickedness by their prosperity, and how the suffering are thereby tempted to apostatize from God, is vividly and to the life described in Psalm lxxiii. The "heart becomes full" of evil inclinations, so full that they violently break forth in deeds of wickedness: compare the remarkably similar passage in Esther vii. 5: then also Acts v. 3.

Ver. 12. The author does not however let himself be deceived by that which is now visible. We may have to wait for God's righteous decision, but in its own time it will certainly come. אשר, "(be it) that," which is as much as to say, "May it, let it, even" (be). A cognate use of the word is found in Leviticus iv. 22; Deuteronomy xi. 27; xviii. 22, where אשר, signifies, "(supposing) that." To מאת, must פעמים be supplied. For remarks on האריך compare chap. vii. 15. לו is the dat. comm. The word כי assigns the reason why the writer does not grudge the wicked his prosperity.

Ver. 13. Inasmuch as long duration is a relative idea, the long duration previously attributed to the wicked does not contradict the assertion made here, that he will not endure long. Of the Persian Empire, which the author has here primarily in view, both assertions held at the same time good,—it lasted long, and yet it lasted a short time. All depends on the standard applied. *As the shadow:* fleeting, transitory as the shadow which vanishes with the setting sun, and leaves not a trace behind (compare Psalm cxliv. 4; Book of Wisdom, ii. 5.)

CHAPTER VIII. 14-17.

The sufferings of the people of God constitute still the point of departure, as in verses 1-8 and in verses 9-13. Instead of racking our brains over their fate, we should rejoice at the good gifts of God which remain. Speculation and questioning conduct to no result, for the divine counsels are incomprehensible by man.

Ver. 14. *There is a vanity which is done upon earth, that there be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and that there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.* Ver. 15. *And I commended mirth, that nothing is better for man under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry, and that abides with him in his labour through the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.* Ver. 16. *When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the travail which takes place on the earth, that neither day nor night doth he see sleep with his eyes.* Ver. 17. *So I beheld the whole work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun, for the sake of which man labours to seek it out, and findeth it not; yea, further, though a wise man should think to know it, he cannot find it.*

Ver. 14. That the lots of the righteous and the wicked are not seldom mixed up with each other, is a *vanity*, and is *intended* to be a vanity. Taking man to be what he now actually is, these things go to constitute the best world we can conceive; and Elster's remark, that "facts cannot fail to make a bitter and gloomy impression," holds good only of the natural man in the believer: the spiritual man judges quite differently. Righteousness would too soon disappear if its reward were bestowed on it immediately, and, as it were, piece by piece. Godliness perishes as soon as it becomes a matter of trade: it is not meant that the righteous should find their satisfaction in an open and manifest recompence. If there existed nem righteous as they should be, righteous throughout, of one piece, then the experience here set forth would of course be suspicious. But as things actually are, whilst sin dwells

even in the righteous, so long as they need to be punished and guarded, so long as they wander too readily from the right path, and especially, so long as they are prone to serve God for hire, the facts under consideration offer no difficulty to those who stand really in righteousness. They may be and are not seldom fiercely perplexed and harassed thereby, but that is all. Really meant complaints at such experiences proceed only from such as, without authority or right, reckon themselves among the righteous;—as may be clearly seen in Malachi. Without doubt, however, as is proved by a considerable number of declarations even from this book, the resemblance between the fate of the righteous and that of the wicked, is but an *external* and *partial* one. All things must finally work together for the good of those who love God: the end will separate the righteous from the wicked. *I said that this also is vanity;* "this also"—this doubtful condition of the pious and the ungodly. *Vanity*, that is, it is to be counted as part of the misery and wretchedness of this life, to which even believers are subject and with which they must put up. He is, of course, a poor fool, who devotes himself to righteousness in order to become rich and honoured, in order to lose none of his family or friends, and so forth.

Ver. 15. This *mirth*, is the cheerful enjoyment of those gifts of God which do not fail us even in circumstances of need, and is put in contrast to the habit of looking out for an open and splendid reward of righteousness—the consequence of the non-bestowal of which is gloomy discontent. Jewish speculators in righteousness thought that they must at once rule the heathen with a sceptre of iron; and when they found that the exact contrary was the case, they hung their heads, refused to find anything more to their liking, and grew dissatisfied with God and the world. The "mirth" spoken of here is quite consistent with the deep earnestness in life recommended by Koheleth in chap. vii. 1 ff. It is a joy which is the direct outflow of a piety that thankfully accepts what God gives, and refuses to be disturbed in its enjoyment thereof by unfounded pretensions. The Berleburger Bible remarks—"Mirth, that is, a godly joyfulness and cheerfulness of heart; in that, namely, the righteous, when he has anything to endure amidst the vanities of the world, which are universal,

and are saddled on all alike, maintains and displays by faith in God a spirit calm and free from cares; and in all the divine arrangements proves himself prompt and lively. *That he should eat and drink and be merry*, that is, that he calmly and with fitting cheerfulness enjoy what God bestows on him. This had been already said in chap. ii. 24; iii. 12, 22; it is here again repeated, and not without reason, but to serve another purpose, namely, as an answer to the objection just urged."

Ver. 16. The *travail* here mentioned is that into which those fall who seek to fathom, and rack their brains about, the ways of God: wherein those are usually the most zealous who are endowed with least capacity to answer the questions raised. The problem is in itself an exceedingly difficult one, but the solution becames enormously more difficult when attempted by those who lack knowledge of the depths of human sinfulness. And this was a characteristic fault of the author's age: hence was there so much murmuring and racking of brains. The author turns his heart to know wisdom, and (in spirit) to see (in the light of wisdom) the travail. ענין can only mean "travail," "torment," not "business," as may be seen on comparing chap. ii. 26, and especially chap. iii. 10. What "travail" is meant, we are informed in the words—"that he does not see;" namely, that man, who is spoken of both before and afterwards, is unable to fathom the divine counsels in the distribution of fates, even though he apply himself earnestly to the work. Knobel explains quite incorrectly—"man who is restlessly busy, and through sheer activity gets no sleep."

Ver. 17. The "travail" proves itself to be useless. We walk by faith and not by sight, and blessed are they that see not and yet believe. Therefore should we leave off worrying our minds. Blessed is the man who takes without questioning what God sends him, in the firm confidence that, however perverted it may appear, it is the right thing, and that all things must work together for the good of those who love God. Jerome says—"Subostendet tamen esse causas rerum omnium et justitiam, quare unumquodque sic fiat: sed in occulto eas latere et non posse ab hominibus comprehendi:" and Cartwright, "si enim opera, quæ fecit Salomo, sapientem

reginam Sabæ in admirationem ita abripiunt ut non esset amplius in illa spiritus, quanto magis opera dei, omnem nostram intelligentiam superantia, nos in admirationem ejus adducant? Ut enim quisque est, ita sunt ejus opera." *Then saw I the whole work of God:* in what aspect he sees it and knows it, to wit, in respect of its *unsearchableness*, we are informed by the words—*that man cannot find*, etc. In the Berleburger Bible we read—"O ye poor blind men, who think by your philosophy to fathom the grounds of the divine leadings, ye are justly cheated! Ye disapprove of all that are beyond human comprehension, when ye ought rather to confess that the higher they transcend your conceptions, so much the diviner are they. The more pains you take to fathom the secrets of wisdom by your reflection, the farther are you from reaching your aim. Of the possession of true wisdom the best sign is when a man is assured that he cannot comprehend the mysteries of the divine dealings with souls."

CHAPTER IX. 1-10.

This section falls into two parts, the *temptation* which assails (verses 1-6), and the *alleviation* and comfort, (*καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη* Mark iv. 39), (ver. 7-10). The temptation, in regard to which the author appears as the representative of the tone of mind then prevailing amongst the people, takes its rise in the same fact as that which was considered in the foregoing section, namely, in the sufferings of the people of God. Since God looks calmly on whilst the wicked swallows up him who is more righteous than himself (Habakkuk i. 13), it seems as if there were no retribution to be found on earth, as if the righteous were deprived of their reward (verses 1-3): furthermore, the gloom and sadness which must take possession of the soul in consequence of such thoughts are deepened by the prospect of that which awaits us after this life (verses 4-6). Against such dark discontent, however, the *spirit raises its voice* in verses 7-10, and answers that God has pleasure in the works of his people, and that in good time the now failing retribution will come. In view of the glorious future the eye should be turned away

from the gloomy present, and we should be joyful through hope. Above all, should we not give ourselves up to a despairing inactivity, but call forth all our powers to fulfil the task which is set us for the present life.

Ver. 1. *For all this I took to heart and* (indeed) *thereby I fathomed all this—that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God; neither love nor hatred doth man know, all things are before them.* Ver. 2. *All things as to all: one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as the sinner, so the good: he that sweareth is as he that feareth an oath.* Ver. 3. *That is evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event to all: yea also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and folly is in their heart while they live, and after that* (they go) *to the dead.* Ver. 4. *For who is preferred? In all the living one may trust, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.* Ver. 5. *For the living know that they shall die, and the dead know nothing at all: neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.* Ver. 6. *Their love and also their hatred and their envy is vanished: neither have they any more for ever a portion in anything that is done under the sun.* Ver. 7. *Go thy way, eat thy bread in joy and drink thy wine with a good heart; for God hath pleasure in thy works.* Ver. 8. *Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment.* Ver. 9. *Look upon life with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy vain life, which he giveth thee under the sun: all the days of thy vain life, for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.* Ver. 10. *All that thy hand findeth to do by thy power, do, for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the hell whither thou goest.*

Ver. 1. The word "for" points to the connection between this discussion and that of chap. viii. 14-17. A further confirmation is here set forth of the result there arrived at, to wit, of the unsearchableness of the ways of God. The righteous and the wise are in the hand of God, in His power, so that He does with them what He will. No one, by his own intentions and his own acts can determine his fate. That acts are not

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spoken of here, in themselves, as acts, as if we were compelled, without any exercise of will, to do what God pleases; but with regard to their results, in so far that *the saddest fate may follow on the best deed*, is clear from the whole context, in which only what befalls man, not what man does, is considered. Ver. 2 especially, which may serve as a commentary to the present one, proves this. For the same reason what is said of *love* and *hatred* cannot be referred to human affections, —as Hitzig does when he writes, "Inasmuch as man has not his acts in his own power, he does not know whether he will love or hate,"—but only to the good and evil providential arrangements in which God's love and hatred seem to embody themselves. J. D. Michaelis justly observes, "In this world we cannot tell by the events of life whether God loves us or hates us, because to the righteous it happens as to the unrighteous; nor can we even know whether God means to show us love by sending prosperity, or hatred by sending adversity." In all the last sections the historical occasion of the Author's words was the miserable fate of the people of God at the time of his writing. We read in Malachi i. 2,—"I love you, saith the Lord, yet ye say, wherein dost thou love us?" "God loves us not, although we are worthy of His love,"—that is the reproach against God, which the Prophet exposes at the very beginning; and which we may therefore judge to have been a kind of watchword at the time. The translation of the Vulgate—"nescit homo, utrum amore an odio dignus sit," has quite missed the right sense. Complaints were raised that he who was worthy of the divine love did not experience it in God's leadings. *Man*, that is, in accordance with what precedes, more precisely, "the wise and righteous man:" a similar usage is found in Psalm xxxvi. 8, where the connection shows that by *the children of men*, we are to understand, the citizens of the kingdom of God. *All things are before them*, that is, may happen to them: the righteous man is not assured against anything. J. D. Michaelis remarks, "All things have they before them, that is, there is the same probability that a man will be loved as that he will be hated, that in prosperity he will experience proofs of God's grace, or in adversity proofs of his disfavour. The one experience is as easy to be conceived as the other."

Ver. 2. The expression—*all things as to all*—presents no difficulty when it is borne in mind that in ver. 1, "Man," is used instead of, *the wise and righteous*, by way of intimating his absolute dependence on the heavenly powers. "All things" (happen to the wise and righteous,) "as to all," that is, as to the rest: they have no peculiar fate, such as was promised to Israel, who, in the Books of Moses, is represented as being put under God's most special providence and care;—they share the universal destiny. A commentary on this intentionally short and enigmatical saying is furnished by what follows. Knobel has a specific against the temptations and difficulties which assailed the author so terribly, and with which believers of all times have to wage fierce warfare, namely, "we must distinguish between the physical and moral order of the world; physical evils are experienced by all without exception; the pious cannot evade them because of their morality, and yet they have not to endure the special punishments of immorality." But if we make the "physical" independent of God, and thus strip God of his true Godhead, and we ourselves at the same time fall into semi-atheism, the remedy is worse than the disease. *Event* or accident, is not set in opposition to the divine ordainment, but to independent action on the part of the righteous, (compare ii. 14, 15; iii. 19.) טוב is prefixed to טהור with the design of showing that the terms "clean, unclean," are to be taken not in the juridical or levitical sense, but in the moral sense. A sufficient evidence of this is, that elsewhere one only is set in opposition to the other: besides, טוב occurs again, to show that in the first instance it serves the purpose of explaining or defining more clearly that which follows. *He that sweareth*—(under certain circumstances, be it observed, a man may swear and yet not be what is meant by the designation "swearer,") refers here to one who swears in a *frivolous* manner. The words stand in remarkable parallelism to Matthew v. 34. To fear an oath, is to look upon it with holy awe, so that only in cases of *necessity* and at the command of *love* can we be induced to take one upon ourselves. It is evident from chap. viii. 2, that the author has no intention whatever of rejecting oaths altogether. Cartwright says, "notandum etiam adjunctum, quo describit improbum, nempe quod jurat, id est juramentis

assuetus est. Cujus igitur ori juramenta et nominis divini usurpatio familiaris et trita est, illum improbum esse constat: contra etiam observandum est, pium non eum appellari, qui non jurat, sed qui a juramento sibi metuit."

Ver. 3. Regarding things from the point of view of natural reason and in a rough matter of fact way, judging them by the vulgar empirical method which he afterwards rejects, the author goes on to say, "that is evil;"—he thus "sins with his tongue," as it is said in Psalm xxxix. 2. Parallel is Psalm lxxiii. 16, where in reference to the same fact it is said —"and I considered in order to know it: a pain was it in mine eyes." But the Psalmist speaks thus only until he comes to the sanctuary of God: then a light suddenly breaks in upon him such as the natural reason cannot supply. Cartwright compares Malachi iii. 14, ff., where the Jews are introduced as complaining, that it is in vain to serve God, and as resting their charge on the fact that they who fear God are unhappy and the heathen are prosperous: his remarks are as follows—"certe, si vere judicare velimus, hac tam impia et blasphema voce Deum esse negant. Nam qui illi justitiam suam adimit, is Deum a mundo tollit, nec enim Deus est nisi justus." The manner of the Scriptures is to let doubts and murmurings have free and full expression, and then to vanquish them in open conflict with the sword of faith. Scepticism and despair cannot possibly bring forward anything stronger than what we find in the Holy Scriptures. And, in fact, this openness and candour in setting forth doubts is one of the best means of overcoming them. Knobel is of opinion that this verse shows "that Koheleth did not believe in immortality and in retribution after death; for had he held such a faith he might easily have taught that the recompence that was not made here would be made on the other side the grave." He, however, who has surrendered this world, has ceased to attach much importance to the world to come: if God's ways here cannot be justified, we shall not be able really and livingly to believe in a future retribution. The author therefore takes exactly the right course, when he, as the representative of his tried and tempted contemporaries, fights and strives above all things with the scepticism which envelopes in darkness the ways of God in the present world.

This task accomplished, the future becomes plain and clear of itself. The words—*amidst all that is done under the sun,* point out that so far from being exceptional it is the usual course of this world that all things should come alike to all. With the expression—"the heart of the children of men is full of evil"—compare chap. viii. 11, according to which by the "children of men," we are to understand those who up to that point had striven after better things. Parallel also is Psalm lxxiii. 10, "therefore turns he, (namely, the wicked,) his people hither;" by his impunity from punishment and his prosperity he induces others to leave the right way and to come over to his manner of thinking. It is a melancholy consideration that external sufferings only too easily exert a demoralizing influence. *And folly is in their heart :*—their heart is filled with foolish thoughts about God's government of the world, and with foolish proposals to help themselves by wrong, when God leaves them in the lurch. On the word אחריו compare chap. vi. 12; vii. 14: after that he, namely, the righteous, has been thus visited by evils which, though external, bring alas! moral ones also in their train; *behind themselves,* that is, after such a mode of existence.

Ver. 4. *For who is preferred?* The reason is given for the words—"And after that to the dead:" for death is the lot of all mortals, and the righteous forms no exception to the rule: as Gesenius renders, "quis enim qui electus sit, *i. e*, moriendi sorte exemtus." As the vowels belong to the marginal reading, and as the Pual does not elsewhere occur, it is better to point as for Niphal, which is frequently employed in the sense of "chosen out, preferred:" see, for example, Jeremiah viii. 3. The unnecessary Masoretic conjecture offered by the marginal reading is most simply explained by Rambach and others as follows, "qui adsocietur, v. adsociari velit sub mortuis." The words, "who is excepted" (from this sad lot?) "are dictated by the feeling that the lot of death is a sad one, and the reason for such a view is assigned by the author when he affirms that "in all the living one may trust." The verb בטח is used in conjunction with אל, to designate one in whom confidence is placed, in Psalm iv. 6, xxxi. 7. בטחון is not "hope," but "confidence, abandonment," see Isaiah xxxvi. 4. Only the living are capable of doing

anything. To be no object of confidence is a miserable condition. On the words — "for the living dog," (or strictly, "as far as the living dog is concerned, so is he") "better than the dead lion," Cartwright remarks — "hæc vox pecudis potius quam hominis dicenda est." This observation agrees with Psalm lxxiii. 22, where the writer brings against himself the charge of having behaved like the cattle, when the prosperity of the ungodly exposed him to temptation. Nor indeed can it be otherwise: when God vanishes from the present world the future is changed into a dismal night of death, by whose darkness all are alike covered.

Ver. 5. The advantage of the living over the dead consists in this, that the former have *consciousness*. This consciousness is here individualised, and one of the forms in which it expresses itself is used to describe the whole. The living have consciousness; they know, for example, that they shall die, which in comparison with utter unconsciousness is unquestionably a good, however sad may be the object of knowledge. Such is the language of natural reason, to whose eye all seems dark and gloomy that lies beyond the present scene, because it fails in this world to discern the traces of divine retribution. The Spirit says on the contrary: "the spirit returns to God who gave it." *Neither have they any more a reward:* that God should recompense them is impossible, inasmuch as the righteous who are dead have no self-conscious personality. To what extent this is the case is indicated by the words—"for their memory is forgotten;" so little power have they to make good a position for themselves, so entirely are they deprived of all means of expressing their life, so completely have they disappeared.

Ver. 6. Alongside of the *hatred* which is condemned, there is one that is allowed, and not only *allowed*, but even commanded (see Psalm xxxi. 7, and Revelations ii. 6). Hatred is indeed to be condemned, but still his condition must be regarded as a degraded one who is unable to hate.

Ver. 7. The voice of the flesh is here opposed by the voice of the spirit. It is exactly so elsewhere; as, for example, in Psalm xxxix, where the Psalmist first strives with God and impatiently demands of Him to know the end of his life and

sufferings, but afterwards rises up and casts down discontent and doubt to the ground. Here also we might say that in verses 1-6 the author speaks as the representative of the then prevailing spirit of the people; not, however, as though he appropriated views that were utterly strange to his own mind, but such as he also himself in his hours of weakness had been compelled to sympathise with. Now, on the contrary, the writer sets himself in God to oppose the popular views and feelings. Calvin's remarks on Psalm xlii. 6 hold good of this place also: "David represents himself to us as divided into two portions. So far as he rests by faith in God's promises, he rises in arms, with a spirit of unconquerable valour, against the feelings and will of the flesh, and condemns at the same time his own weak and yielding conduct." *Here*, just as there, it is the spirit which is strong in God that enters the lists against the "weaker vessel," the timid fearful soul, which in the book of Job is introduced under the personification of Job's wife. There is undoubtedly a reference to individual men, but still it is the "man Judah" of Isaiah v. 3, who is, in the first instance, addressed. This is evident from the entire context, of which the sufferings of the *people of God* form the point of departure. *Eat thy bread in joy and drink thy wine with a good heart.* "Joy and good heart," stand in opposition to the gloomy discontent which led them formerly to say, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the eyes of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, or where is the God of judgment?" (Malachi ii. 17). The contrast to eating bread and drinking wine is presented in such passages as 1 Samuel i. 7, where it is said of Hannah, "she wept and ate not;" Psalm xlii. 4, "My tears are my meat day and night;" Psalm lxxx. 6, "Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure," ("Bread of tears," signifies bread that consists of tears), and Psalm cii. 10, Job iii. 24. *God hath pleasure in thy works*, (רצה with the accusative means, "to have pleasure in anything,") and, therefore, in His good time thou wilt see the reward which thou now missest, and "ye shall discern again the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," (Malachi iii. 18). We have in this verse the dis-

tinct negation of verse 1. There, by a hasty conclusion drawn from the fact of the temporal sufferings of the righteous, it was affirmed that man does not at all know whether he has grace before God or not, whether he may or may not expect love from God. The great sting of temporal suffering is, that we very easily get to fancy that it will last for ever, and that it is apt to lead us into erroneous thoughts about God's grace. We can only overcome this temptation by rising in faith above the present. In Psalm lxxiii. 17, "till I come to the sanctuaries of God, then will I look on their end." The thing first mentioned stands to the second in the relation of cause to effect. Having entered into the sanctuary of God, the Psalmist sees that the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the righteous are only transitory, and thus he attains to an unbounded confidence in God's help and redemption. A real, if not a verbal, parallel to the words, "God has pleasure in thy works," may be found in the commencement of Psalm lxxiii: "only good is God to Israel, to those who are of a pure heart." God is good, and not evil as the righteous may well fancy when they are plagued continually, when they are chastened every morning, whilst the wicked live in prosperity. Luther remarks on the verse, "He means to say something like this—thou livest in the world where there is nothing without that, for there is much sorrow, heart suffering, misery, there is death and much vanity: make use then of life with love, and do not make thine own life sour and hard with anxious and fruitless cares. Solomon says what he says not to the secure and godless children of the world, but to such as truly fear God and believe. These he comforts, and would fain see them comfort themselves and rejoice in God. To them he gives the exhortation, to be glad; he does not bid those to drink wine and eat, etc., who were beforehand too secure, and being godless and lost, spent their lives in indolence and debauchery."

Ver. 8. *Let thy garments be always white.* *White* is in Scripture the colour of serene splendour symbolically shadowing forth glory: (compare my Commentary on Revelations iv. 4.) The Angel of Mark xvi. 5 appears in white clothes, as a sign that the rank of the angels is the same as that of the "saints," who are the glorious. The clothes of Christ be-

came white in His transfiguration, (Matthew xvii. 2, Mark ix. 3, Luke ix. 29.) White clothes are borne by the glorified in Revelations iii. 4, 5, vii. 9, as a symbol of glory. In this place white clothes were to be put on *to express the confident hope of the future glory of the people of God.* Spener, in testimony of his hope of a better future for the Church, caused himself to be buried in a white coffin. The adoption of white clothes signifies here the anticipation of the future victory of the people of God. Analogous is Revelations vi. 11, where in answer to their prayer, which could not yet be perfectly fulfilled, each of the slaughtered receives provisionally a white garment. There also the white garment has an *anticipatory* significance. Hand in hand with the white garment goes the *oil on the head.* This oil is the "oil of joy" mentioned in Psalm xlv. 8, and in Isaiah lxi. 3. In joyful circumstances, on festive occasions men were accustomed to anoint themselves: such oil was an embodiment of festive joy, on which account the oil of gladness is opposed to sadness in Isaiah lxi. 3. The true members of the people of God ought always to be in a festive, joyous mood, inasmuch as they rise by faith above the gloomy present to the glorious future awaiting them.

Ver. 9. *Look upon life,* which is as much as to say, be happy, in that thou turnest away thine eye from the sad present and fixest it on the glorious future, and in that thou enjoyest those little pleasures which God offers thee in the midst of this vain existence, and which thou mayest not sour and embitter by cares and vexatious questions. The woman appears here not as the source, but as the companion of joy; and the words, "with the woman whom thou lovest," may to a certain extent be regarded as a parenthesis. אשר before נתן refers to the days of life, (chap. vi. 17.) The connection is the following, "look upon life . . . all the days of thy vain life, which He giveth thee under the sun, all the days of thy vain life." By the repetition of the last words we are expressly taught that, in the midst of the vanity and travail with which human existence is burdened (Genesis iii.), we are pressingly summoned not to seal up the sources of enjoyment which still remain open to us. הוא, "this," namely, to see life, to be pleased.

Ver. 10. Despair carries with it the danger of a sluggish inactivity. Against this, men are here warned. Luther remarks, "an admonition to the lazy. For when they see that so much pains and toil are lost, they are minded to do nothing but to let everything stand quite still." As to substance, Hebrews xii. 12 presents a parallel, where to the severely tried and tempted it is said, *διὸ τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας καὶ τὰ παραλελυμένα γόνατα ἀνορθώσατε.* "Sluggish hands" are ascribed to the suffering even in Job iv. 3, and Isaiah xxxv. 3. The saying, "my hand finds something," signifies, "I am capable of something," "I am in a position for something," "I have opportunity for something:" (compare Judges ix. 33, 1 Samuel x. 7, xxv. 8.) According to the accents, and the sense, בכחך belongs not to עשׂה, but to what goes before. The duty of doing all that it is in any way possible to do is based, in the second part of the verse, on the consideration that what is here left undone never is done, that the tasks appointed by God for this life which are here unaccomplished remain unaccomplished, and that the gifts and powers lent for this life should be used in this life. *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the hell whither thou goest:*— it is not so in the intermediate kingdom, nor is it so in the kingdom of glory, (1 Corinthians xiii. 8). There are forms of knowledge and work which belong only to the present life, and he who does not employ them, has buried his talent in the earth, and thus committed a heavy sin,—a sin, the consequences of which will stretch into eternity. Even Jerome compares the saying of our Lord in John ix. 4, *ἐμὲ δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρα ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νὺξ, ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι.* That there is a reference to the verse now under notice, can scarcely be called in question. It begins at once with the words "for no *work*." Even Lücke, although this passage was not in his mind, felt that the Lord made partial use of an already existing expression. "Day and night mark the fixed and bounded time of the earthly career of the earthly activity of our Lord." Feeling that death shortly awaited Him, Christ says, "there comes for me the night, when, *as it is said*, no man can work." What Jesus spake, alluding to the present verse, holds good for all believers.

VERSES 11, 12.

When the position of the people of God is a sad one, whilst on the contrary, the world triumphs, what we should do is to bear in mind that the destinies of men are decided in heaven, that their fortunes are not determined according to might, or according to weakness, and that a sudden catastrophe often lays low that which was highly exalted To have God as our friend is the main thing; all depends at last on that; and that alone decides.

Ver. 11. *I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the heroes, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all. Ver.* 12. *For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are fallen in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare: like them are the children of men snared at the time of misfortune, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*

Ver. 11. The words, *I returned and saw under the sun,* indicate that the writer takes up again the consideration of sublunary things, which had been interrupted, and turns his attention to a new subject. Compare iv. 1, 7. In the two passages just quoted ואראה is used; here we find the Infinitive, which is more accurately defined by the verb. finit. which precedes. After the words, *under the sun,* we must mentally add, "and indeed I saw." The point of departure here, also, is the tribulation of the people of God, but considered from a new point of view. *The race is not to the swift,* for they may be hindered by something or other,—sometimes even by the very slightest obstacle, so that the less swift shall arrive sooner than they. *Nor the battle to the heroes.* This same view, which Rationalism looks upon as "fatalistic," (Knobel) David gave utterance to in the presence of Goliath, himself furnishing a living illustration of the affirmation of the text. See I Samuel xvii. 47, "the battle is the Lord's, and he gives you into our hands:" further also, Psalm xxxii. 16, 17, "the king is not saved by his great hosts, a hero is not delivered

by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety, neither doth he deliver by his great strength." Jahaziel the Prophet says in 2 Chronicles xx. 15, "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's." The point of view in these passages, (compare besides Jeremiah xlvi. 6, where speaking against Egypt the Prophet says—"the swift will not escape, nor the hero be delivered:" Proverbs xxi. 30, 31), as well as in the one we are now illustrating is that of *consolation:* if it depended on human strength the people of God must succumb. "Favour" means much the same as "preference, popularity." In connection with the words, *for time and chance happeneth to them all,* whose import is, "they all are subject to the influence of time and chance," compare Psalm xxxi. 16, "my times are in thy hand, deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from my persecutors." That the fates of the Psalmist, as indeed of all men, are in God's hand, is represented there as the ground of their hope of deliverance, as the light in the dark night of adversity. *Chance* here is not to to be regarded as a power alongside of and opposed to God: chance is that which happens to man without his co-operation, and the idea of the verse is that of Romans ix. 16—ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος, οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεοῦντος Θεοῦ· If everything depends on time and chance, we ought not to despair in view of the seeming omnipotence of the world, supposing God to be our friend. For to the friends of God belongs the future. All things human, let them be as proud and splendid as they may, let them boast and be puffed up as they may, are but loose chaff, which the wind of divine judgments will sweep away.

Ver. 12. The general assertion, that everything mighty and distinguished is subject to chance, is grounded on the particular fact which is here brought specially under notice, the fact, namely, that no man is able to escape a catastrophe coming over him. In the background stands the thought—*the Persian also in his time will fall under such a catastrophe, and in fact the powers of this world generally:* their apparent omnipotence will not deliver them. When Alexander came, the seal of divine confirmation was set to this declaration. According to the context, the "time" of man

must mean here, the time of his downfal: elsewhere "day" is used in the same sense (Job xviii. 20). Man's ignorance of his time is brought here under consideration so far as it is determined by a power standing absolutely above him. *Trap or snare* is quite a common image of the divine judgments: *Net* is used for this purpose in Hosea vii. 12, "I will spread out my net over them;" in Ezekiel xii. 13, "and I spread out my net over him, and he is taken in my snare;" Ezekiel xxxii. 3, "and I spread over thee (Pharoah) my net in the assembly of many peoples, and they draw thee up with my snare." With regard to יוקש the part. Pual compare Ewald, § 169 d.

VERSES 13-18.

In the midst of all their misery one high prerogative has remained to the people of God, to wit, *wisdom*, which is a nobler possession than the strength in which the world temporarily rejoices. That this wisdom is despised because it is in the form of a servant, detracts nothing at all from its worth. Were its voice only heard it would exert a wholesome and preservative influence even on the heathen world; it would become a salt to it; whereas now the heathen states being under the rule and direction of folly hurry unrestrainably to ruin. In the background, however, stands the conviction that the nation which possesses wisdom must of necessity in due season rise again to supremacy. In verses 13-15 a parable is set before us: in ver. 16 we have its interpretation. In verses 17-18 the thought is carried out into further detail.

Ver. 13. *This also saw I as wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:* Ver. 14. *A little city and few men within it, and there came a great king against it and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.* Ver. 15. *And he found therein a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man thought of this same poor man.* Ver. 16. *And I said, Wisdom is better than strength, nevertheless the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heard.* Ver. 17. *The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the cry of him that ruleth among*

fools. Ver. 18. *Better is wisdom than weapons of war; and one sinner destroyeth much good.*

Ver. 13. Even Luther and Mercerus saw that in verses 13-15 a parable is presented to us, and not an historical occurrence. The poor man with his delivering wisdom is an image of Israel. The words, "this also saw I," as well as those just noticed, "I returned and saw;" (ver. 11) introduce a new subject of consideration. It is not allowable to explain the words, "this also," as if they signified, "along with other evidences of wisdom which occur in the world," for no allusion has been previously made to such exhibitions of wisdom. Nor may we adopt the rendering—"this also saw I, (namely) wisdom under the sun;" for the closing words describe the sphere of vision generally. The best explanation is rather the one given in the text, namely, "this also saw I as wisdom." חכמה thus defines more closely the quality of that which, along with other things, he saw; and the meaning would be, "this also saw I under the sun,—a wisdom which seemed to me great." Luther remarks, "he calls it here a great wisdom, for it is in truth a great wisdom, to deliver a little and poor city possessed of few resources from great and powerful enemies."

Ver. 14. מָצוֹר from צור signifies in chap. vii. 26, (מצורה in chap. ix. 12,) "the implement of hunting, of snaring, the net;" here it is used of "siege-works."

Ver. 15. The subject of מצא is, the Great King: Rambach remarks, "contra omnem opinionem expertus est."

Ver. 16. This verse contains the practical application of the parable. On the words, *And his words are not heard*, Hitzig remarks, "In this particular case they had, it is true, not despised his wisdom, and they had listened to his words. But it was an exceptional case, necessity drove them thereto, and afterwards they forgot him." Cartwright says, "viri humilis conditionis sapientia, tametsi splendeat maxime, tamen paupert. te tanquam nube interjecta ita obfuscatur, ut levi temporis momento omnium oculos a se aversos habens memoria excidat."

Ver. 17. Attention is called, on the very face, to the close connection between this verse and the last, by the catchword נשמעים. The author's great aim throughout this whole connection being to console, he could not possibly rest satisfied

with the little consolatory matter advanced in ver. 16. Moreover, the close connection referred to is required by the parallel passages, which allude to wisdom as the jewel still remaining to the people of God, and as the pledge of a joyful termination of their present experiences. *Heard in quiet :*—that is the condition of their wholesome influence. Israel would have proved a salt to the heathen world if ear had only been given to the voice of wisdom dwelling in his midst. Hitzig remarks justly, that "the quiet hearing of words, promises their fulfilment, a thing which is here implied." In opposition to the passive state of quietly listening to the words of wisdom is set the activity developed in our own crying. He that ruleth among fools, namely, the world-monarch, is himself to be conceived as a fool. This is shown by his conduct in vehemently crying instead of calmly listening. Compare Isaiah xlii. 2, where it is said of the servant of God, " he shall *not* cry, nor call, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," in contrast to the clamorous and passionate conduct of a worldly conqueror, who thinks of nothing but carrying through his own will, and who blusters and rages when he meets with opposition.

Ver. 18. *That wisdom is better than weapons of war,* would show itself in the example of the powers of the world, if they only lent an ear to its voice, and it will one day be proved in the experience of the nation whose privilege it is to possess wisdom, in that day when, notwithstanding its defenceless impotence, it is raised to universal dominion. *One sinner,* for example, the heathen world-monarch, *destroyeth much good ;* טובה is not good in the moral sense, but " possession, property, prosperity," as in chap. v. 10-17 ; vi. 6. The truth of this assertion was first made clear in the wretched decline and sudden downfal of the Persian Empire.

CHAPTER X. 1-3.

Resuming the subject touched upon in the second half of chap. ix. 19, the writer cheers the people of God, groaning under the tyranny of the world, by directing attention to the fact that their enemies, (in the first instance the Persians,)

were given up to folly and its destructive influences. Where folly rules, destruction cannot be far off, as it is said, "thou didst hide their heart from understanding, therefore shalt thou not suffer them to remain exalted," (Job xvii. 4.)

Ver. 1. *Dead flies cause through putrefaction, the oil of the perfumer to stink: the glorious in wisdom and honour, a little folly.* Ver. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand and a fool's heart is at his left.* Ver. 3. *Yea also in the way which he goes is his heart lacking, and he saith of every one, he is foolish.*

Ver. 1. Not without significance is it said, "Flies of death," and not "dead flies," although these are meant. The effect described is not produced by flies as such; but is so entirely connected with death, that instead of flies any other dead thing might have been mentioned. "Dead flies," are only specified because they find their way first of all to the salve pot, and because the author wished to adduce some small thing. Physical death is the more prominently referred to as its correspondent, in spiritual things, is folly. The employment of the singular of the verb יבאיש calls special attention to it. When special emphasis is meant to be laid on the second word in the *stat. constr.*, the verb is accommodated to it. That the singular depends on כיות was recognised even by Symmachus, *μυιῶν θάνατος σήψει ἔλαιον εὐῶδες μυρεψοῦ.* The oil of the perfumer is mentioned as being a costly, noble substance. יביע is added subsidiarily, for the purpose of indicating more distinctly the cause: "in that they cause to putrify," in consequence of the process of putrification which they commence. But that it serves only a subsidiary purpose is evident, because יבאיש does not suit any but the second clause. "To make to stink," is used elsewhere for "to make contemptible" in Genesis xxxiv. 30, (compare Exodus v. 21,) and in this sense it is to be repeated in the second clause. יקר signifies originally "dear, costly," and then "excellent," glorious, noble." Compare Jeremiah xv. 19, where יקר "excellent" is opposed to זולל "contemptible;" and Lamentations iv. 2, "the sons of Zion, the glorious," (Psalm xlv. 10; Proverbs iii. 15; vi. 26.) מן is used here causatively. At its commencement under Cyrus, the Persian kingdom was glorious in wisdom and honour: its praises were sounded not only by the

profane, but also by the sacred writers. Geier remarks with regard to the two terms "wisdom and honour," "duo hæc vocabula duplicem pretii causam indicant, sapientiam et honorem, *i. e.*, partim internam culturam partim externam hominum existimationem opes aut felicitatem gloriosam." *A little folly:* that is, folly which is little in proportion to the entire system and edifice of which it proves the ruin. Corresponding to the active cause here, namely, "the little folly," stands that which is acted upon, namely, "the much good" in chap. ix. 18. In the New Testament also the leaven is called little, not in relation to a greater quantity thereof, but to the whole mass (ὅλον φύραμα:) see the parallel passages 1 Cor. v. 6; Galatians v. 9 Folly, sin, is so little and insignificant that on a superficial consideration it is scarcely noticed, or at all events, is looked upon only as a bagatelle, a peccadillo.

Ver. 2. The right hand being "the principal one, the dearest, the strongest hand, with which we chiefly grasp, work, wield our weapons, and so forth," we say of that which is as it ought to be, that it is at the right, whilst of things that are no longer in their normal state, we say that they are at the left. A comparison has rightly been instituted between this expression and our saying, "his heart is in the right place." Attention is drawn to the heart here, so far as in it are the roots of the understanding, which is always determined and guided by *inclination.*

Ver. 3. *On the way which he goes,* in his actions. When the heart has taken a perverse turn, the hands are unable to lay hold of anything rightly. *He saith of every one, he is foolish.* By a strange confusion of places, he speaks thus especially of those on whom God has bestowed the gift and privilege of wisdom. Hitzig says, "Himself he dare not hold for a fool: for therein would lie some truth, and a beginning of understanding would have been made."

CHAPTER X. 4.

In the difficult circumstances in which they are placed, the people of God should be on their guard against *irritability,* which would inevitably tend to increase their sufferings: and

further, they should carefully guard that precious treasure of *calmness of soul* which is his portion who sees the hand of God in everything, even in that which is hardest to bear, and resigns himself patiently and humbly to the Divine will.

Ver. 4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place, for yielding pacifieth great offence.*

The spirit of the ruler, to wit, of the foolish one, (chap. ix. 17, x. 1-3,) of the sinner, (chap. ix. 18.) Hitzig remarks, "the ruler here is one who, when angered, is capable of committing great offences" *against thee*. The author addresses the covenant people, against whom the minds of the heathen rulers were greatly irritated, because they had got wind of the pretensions made by them to the privilege of wisdom, and to the future possession of the throne of the world. What the *place* is for the people of God, is plain from the *yielding*, from the retiring gentleness, mentioned in the second clause, which is exclusively found amongst those who commit their cause to God. Through it Jacob overcame Esau, and David Saul, (1 Samuel xxvi.) The contrast to מרפא is in Proverbs xiv. 30, קנאה "anger, passion." *Great sins*, into which a passionate tyrant inevitably falls, when he meets with resistance. To rage against the people of God is a great sin. Cartwright says, "hæc igitur animi submissio et patientia turbulentissimas perturbationum et animi motuum tempestates serenat tumidissimos et maxime inflatos affectuum fluctus tranquillat, et ex leone agnum reddit. Quamobrem connitendum, ut hac virtute imbuamur, qua cum deo, tum hominibus placeamus, etiam his, qui a pietate et humanitate procul remoti sunt."

CHAPTER X. 5-10.

The humiliation of the people of God, and the triumph of the world, is a heavy stone of stumbling. But in His own good time God will remove this offence out of the way: those who have used violence will meet with recompence: and it is the less possible that they should escape ruin as they are utterly destitute of the corrective and preservative element of wisdom.

Ver. 5. *There is an evil which I saw under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler:* Ver. 6. *Folly was set*

on great heights, and the rich sit in low place. Ver. 7. *I saw servants on horses and princes walking on foot as servants.* Ver. 8. *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it: and whoso breaketh through a wall, a serpent shall bite him.* Ver. 9. *Whoso looseneth stones shall be hurt therewith, and he that cleaveth wood shall be injured thereby.* Ver. 10. *If the iron has become blunt, and he has not whetted the edge, he must put to more strength, and wisdom has the advantage of amendment.*

Ver. 5. *The Ruler,* absolutely is the heavenly one, even as in chap. v. 8, and chap. viii. 2, 4, *the king* is the heavenly king. Of the heavenly ruler, שליט is used in Daniel iv. 23, v. 21, also. The correct view is given by Jerome as communicated to him by the Jew of whose assistance he availed himself, "Hebræus potentem et principem a cujus facie, ignoratio videatur egredi, Deum exposuit, quod putent homines in hac inæqualitate rerum illum non juste et ut æquum est judicare." The ב before שגגה is of great importance. It is not really an "error," *it only has the seeming of one;* it bears this appearance only to those superficial minds whose eyes are fastened on the present, and which are unable to survey the whole and take the end into view.

Ver. 6. This verse sets before us "the evil," the apparent "fault" in providence. The matter treated of is the downfall of the people of God. According to what precedes, the "folly" spoken of must be that of the heathens, especially that of the Persians. By the "rich" we cannot understand such as are now actually so, for then they would not be sitting in a low place, but such as by right should be so. According to the divine destination, Israel was a *rich* people. To him the promise had been given, "there shall be no poor among you—(אביון forms a strict contrast to the word עשיר employed here) —for the Lord will bless thee," (Deuteronomy xv. 4:) and further, "thou shalt lend unto many nations, and shalt borrow from no one; thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee," (Deuteronomy xv. 6, xxviii. 11.) The prosperity meant for the Israelites was prefigured in the opulence which, through the divine blessing, was enjoyed by their forefathers, who walked in God's ways: compare Genesis xiii. 2. "And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and

gold." It is true that the promise given in the law rested on the expressly specified condition of faithfulness in fulfilling the divine commands; and failure therein must of course lead to suspension of the promise. But still the promise might not be for ever revoked; and because this seemed to be the case, it looked as if there were a fault in the divine government. This appearance is done away with by what follows. In connection with בשפל compare verse 23 of Psalm cxxxvi. which was written during the dominion of the Persians, "who remembered us in our low estate, בישפלנו." שָׁפָל is only used in these two passages.

Ver. 7. A world turned upside down: Servants ride and masters walk. *Servants,*—such, by right and by God's appointment, were the heathen; for Israel was called to universal dominion: him were the nations meant to obey, (Genesis xlix. 10.) The Jews were a kingdom of priests, (Exodus xix. 6;) before them their enemies would be compelled to play the hypocrite, and they should tread on their high places, (Deut. xxxiii. 29;) through them all nations were to be blessed, and as the dispensers of blessing, the latter must by consequence take up towards them the position of dependent petitioners, (Isaiah xliv. 5; xlv. 14.) "Thou shalt be above only and thou shalt not be beneath," (Deuteronomy xxviii. 13-43:) So ought it to be according to their true idea, and so must it some time really be: compare Daniel vii. 27, "and the kingdom and the dominion, and the power over the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High:" compare also Isaiah lxi. 5, "and strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers." And so in fact it is now as to the essential features: in Christ and His Church Israel has attained to dominion over the world. At the time, however, when the author wrote, the idea and the reality stood in most glaring contrast to each other. "We are servants," it is said in Ezra ix. 9. In Lamentations v. 8, exactly as here, those are styled servants who by right should be such, although they actually are not—"servants rule over us and there is none that delivereth out of their hand," on which Ch. B. Michaelis remarks, "qui nobis potius si pii fuissemus servire debuissent, Deut. xxviii. 48.

Princes: that is, by right and according to God. The passage of chief authority on this point is Lamentations i. 1 where Israel is called "the princess over the provinces."

Ver. 8. The writer now proceeds to advance considerations which may prove a consolation in such abnormal circumstances. But *whoso diggeth a ditch* (גומץ is a pure Aramaic word) *shall fall into it.* It was the custom to dig ditches, which were covered with branches of trees, in order to catch lions and other wild beasts, and it might come to pass that a man should fall unwittingly into the ditch which he himself had dug. That which may happen in the external sense, does always and inevitably happen when any one digs a ditch in the moral sense. He who prepares mischief for his neighbour will himself be overtaken by ruin: the conquering kingdoms of this world prepare their own downfall by that which they do to others; but above all do they expose themselves to inevitable divine vengeance who deal unfairly by the people of God. That is a sweet consolation for those who suffer wrong. Passages of greatest weight in relation to this matter are Psalm vii. 16, 17, "he hath made a pit and digged it, but he falleth into the ditch which he maketh. His mischief returns on his own head, and his wrong cometh down on his own pate." Psalm lvii. 7, "A net have they prepared for my steps, they bent my soul, they digged before me a ditch, they fell into it themselves," (compare besides Proverbs xxvi. 27, Sirach xxvii. 29). *Whoso breaketh through a wall, a serpent shall bite him.* Serpents often lurked in walls (Amos v. 19). He therefore who breaks through a common wall may easily get bitten by a serpent. That which happens sometimes physically, takes place always morally. He who breaks through a wall in the moral world, he who makes attacks on the property of his neighbour, is bitten by the serpent of divine righteousness, so certainly as that God has spoken, "thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmarks" (Deuteronomy xix. 14), and "cursed is he who removes his neighbour's landmarks" (Deuteronomy xxvii. 17). The snake is used as an image of divine judgment also in Amos ix. 3. גדר and גדרה designate in particular the walls built to protect vineyards and other property.

Ver. 9. *Whoso looseneth stones* (compare הסיע אבנים "to

break stones loose" in 1 Kings v. 31) *shall be hurt therewith* (LXX., διαπονθήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς,) *whoso cleaveth wood shall be injured thereby,* סָבִי in the Chaldee, "periculo se exposuit," in Hithpael, "in periculo versari," connected with מסכן "poor" in chap. iv. 13, ix. 15, 16; with מסכנות "poverty," in Deuteronomy viii. 9; and with מסכן "impoverished" in Isaiah xl. 20. In common life one may easily receive injuries whilst engaged in occupations requiring violent exertion. But he will inevitably receive injury who in the moral sphere carries on occupations involving violence, who does works, which in respect of force resemble the breaking of stones, and the splitting of wood.

Ver. 10. The misery of the heathen world is that it does not possess in wisdom a corrective, that, in fact, it has nothing on which the iron of their understanding may be whetted when its edge has become dull. In this respect the people of God has an infinite advantage over it. Whoso possesses such a corrective must be exalted, however deeply he may have sunk: he who possesses it not, must perish, to whatever height he may have risen. *When the iron has become dull.* קהה is only another mode of writing כהה. Piel, however, is used there undeniably in an intransitive sense: and that the iron must be the subject here is clear from what follows: "and he," to wit, he whom it concerns, the owner of the hatchet; whereas this could not well be if this owner did not already form the subject to קהה. פנים signifies first "face" then "edge:" so in Ezekiel xxi. 21. קלל "to be light," in the Pilp. form, "to make light," then "to sharpen;" for this latter meaning we need adduce no examples, seeing that "to sharpen" is simply "to make light." חילים occurs elsewhere also in the sense of "powers;" and גבר in that of "to strengthen," (Zechariah x. 6, 12). He puts to, applies, more strength, but without attaining a satisfactory result. This holds good both of the physical and the spiritual sphere. The verb כישר is used in the sense of "to be right" in Esther viii. 5; the substantive כשרון in that of "capacity, ability," in chap. ii. 21, iv. 4 of this book. On this ground we are justified in attaching to the word הכשיר here, the meaning, "to make right, to amend, to correct,"—a meaning, moreover, which suits the connection admirably. Others have adopted

the less appropriate explanation, "ea est sapientiæ præstantia, ut prosperum eventum consiliis suorum spondeat," appealing to the fact that כשׂר occurs in the sense of "prosper" in chap. xi. 6, and כשרון in that of "gain, advantage" in chap. v. 10.

CHAPTER X. 11-20.

In order to quicken in the minds of his fellow-countrymen the hope of an imminent termination of the rule of their tyrants, the author points out that their character is such as to render it impossible for them to continue long their present courses. Of that character wickedness and folly are fundamental features, (ver. 11-15.) The king and his nobles are given up to drunkenness and debauchery, (ver. 16, 17.)

The system of state is utterly destitute of moral vigour: speedy ruin is promised by the prevailing rottenness and sensuality, and by the omnipotence of gold, (ver. 18, 19.) In ver. 20, the author indicates the reason why, when treating of the events and relations of his time, he limits himself to gentle and enigmatical hints—a character which for the sake of clearness we have not kept up in our exposition of the contents of the book.

Ver. 11. *If the snake bites without enchantment, so has the man of an evil tongue no advantage.* Ver. 12. *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, and the lips of the fool swallow up himself.* Ver. 13. *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his mouth mischievous madness.* Ver. 14. *And the fool maketh many words; man knoweth not what shall be, and what will happen after him, who could tell it?* Ver. 13. *The labour of the fool wearieth him, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.* Ver. 16. *Woe to thee, O Land, whose king is a child, and whose princes eat in the morning.* Ver. 17. *Blessed art thou, O Land, whose king is a son of the noble, and whose princes eat in due season, for strength and not for gluttony.* Ver. 18. *Through great rottenness sinketh the beam, and through idleness of the hands drippeth the house.* Ver. 19. *Eating change they into laughter, and wine maketh glad the living, and money answereth all things.* Ver. 20. *Even in*

thy closet curse not the king, and in thy bed-chamber curse not the rich, for the birds of heaven carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Ver. 11. When suffering under the evil tongue of the heathen, Israel is exhorted to look to the divine retribution, which will come not only on the works of the *hands*, but also on the works of the *tongue*, (Matthew xii. 36, 37.) He will thus see that the man who is sinned against with the tongue is in a better case than the man who sins with his tongue. The snake is here the *spiritual* snake, to wit, the man whose poisonous wickedness causes him to resemble the snake. In the New Testament the wicked pharisees are styled ὄφεις, γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν. To the snake corresponds, in the second clause, the "owner of the tongue." *Without enchantment;* this is never applied when it is foreseen that it will be *fruitless*. To enchantment, in the case of ordinary snakes, correspond supplicative prayers in the case of spiritual snakes. The main passage on this point is Psalm lviii. 5, 6: "Poison have they (the wicked) like the poison of snakes: like a deaf adder stoppeth he his ear. Which hearkeneth not to the voice of the charmer, of the enchanter, who can enchant well." The commentary to the words *has no advantage* is supplied by the declaration of ver. 12, "the lips of the fool swallow up himself," and by that of ver. 8, "he that diggeth a ditch shall fall into it." The connection, referring as it does to serpents, defines *the* tongue, more precisely, to be the *evil poisonous* tongue. Psalm cxl. 12, supplied the foundation for the expression, "the possessor of the tongue;"—"the man of the tongue will not prosper in the land." The man of the tongue, is put there in contrast to the man of wicked and violent deeds. In ver. 3 of the same Psalm we read, "they sharpen their tongue like the serpent; adder's poison is under their lips:" and this passage, along with Psalm lviii, serves as a commentary on the figurative description of enemies as snakes.

Ver. 12. חן is the grace that wins favour. Compare Proverbs xxii. 11, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the king is his friend." Psalm xlv. 2, "grace was poured out over thy lips." Luke ii. 52; iv. 22, "and all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words, (ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος,) which proceeded out of his mouth." In

Christ was fully verified the saying, "the words of the wise, that is, of the true Israelites, are grace:" by his grace, in which each of his servants participates, he draws the whole heathen world to himself. The lips are used to represent speech, discourse, in the second clause. The lips of the fool, of the heathen in his natural condition, and specially of the heathen tyrant and dominant nation, swallow them up, because they set them at emnity with God and man. Their thought was to swallow up others. to destroy others by their mischievous discourse: (compare Psalm v. 10, "their throat is an open sepulchre:") but instead of swallowing up others they swallow up themselves. Compare Proverbs xviii. 7, "A fool's mouth prepares him horror, and his lips are a snare to his soul;" and Psalm lxiv. 9, "and they are cast down, over them cometh their own tongue," so far, namely, as it draws upon them the punishment and judgment of God.

Ver. 13. In the proportion in which we bring before our minds the entire extent of the foolishness of our enemy, in that proportion will our hope of final victory be lively. Such as are every inch fools cannot be far from ruin. *The end of his mouth*, which Hitzig rightly explains, "the end which his mouth makes with its discoursings." *Mischievous* madness, that is, madness which is hurtful first to others, but afterwards also to himself, so certainly as there is a divine retribution. He is not a good-natured, harmless, but a *mischievous*, fool.

Ver. 14. *And the fool maketh many words:*—words such as those of which James speaks in chap. iv. 13, of his Epistle, (compare also Luke xii. 18-20,) to wit, plans for the future, what he will then do, how he will live in splendour and merriness, how he will spread himself out in all directions and humble all his foes. That this is the more precise import of the words is evident from what follows. It is, furthermore, of the nature of the "fool," to talk of such matters; this therefore by itself would justify the explanation given. To all the high flying thoughts and proud words of the Persian the lie was all at once given on the appearance of Alexander. That event proved the author of this book to be a *wise man*.

Ver. 15. True religion affords fine culture. Even Moses described the people of God as, by divine grace, the wisest among the nations, (Deuteronomy iv.,) and the heathen as a

foolish people, (Deut. xxxii.) That which in Genesis xlix. 21, is spoken primarily of Naphtali—"he giveth goodly words"—is but an individualization, and holds good substantially of entire Israel. The Persians appeared as coarse barbarians in comparison with the people of God: and it was impossible that the supreme power should remain long in the hands of such blunderers. Where the mind, the spirit is, there in the long run must be the authority. *The work of the fool wearies him;* and for the simple reason, that we can only carry on that business with pleasure and love, for which we have spiritual capacity. עמל is treated as a feminine for the sake of avoiding the violation of euphony which would be presented in the verb by the third masculine. *Because he knoweth not how to go to the city:* compare Proverbs xiii. 16; xiv. 8, "the prudent man in his wisdom understandeth his way," and ver. 5, "the prudent man understandeth his step." *Here,* as ver. 3 shows, he cannot even find his way—he is at sea regarding it. The way into the city is specified, as being the most frequented. He who is unable to find that, must be sadly gnorant of the bearings of a district.*

Ver. 16. *Woe to thee, O Land, whose king is a child.* Out of a prudent regard to his position and circumstances the author here uses indefinite and general language, (compare v. 20:) at the same time it is clear enough from the context, (specially from ver. 19,) that he had in view the state of the Persian Empire. It is in reality as if he said—"Woe to thee, O Land of Persia, because thy kings are children?" That נער refers, not to *age,* but to *boyish childish character,* is plain both from the context, (Geier says, "a stultitia absolute considerata pergit ad certam ejus speciem, ratione peculiaris subjecti, nempe in magistratu constituti;") from the parallel passages *here,* and from the contrast drawn in ver. 17. In precisely the same manner is Rehoboam called נער in 2 Chronicles xiii. 7, although when he ascended the throne he was already forty-one years old: so also in Isaiah iii. 12, are bad rulers described as women and children, (compare further 1 Corinth. xiv. 20.) Not only had Xerxes a boyish character, but,

* Rambach says, "Similitudo desumta est a viatore, qui ad urbem facturus iter rectam ignorat viam atque proinde errabundus per avia et invia circa urbem vagatur."

according to the Israelitish standard, according to the standard of God's law, even the better Persian rulers were more like boys than men. *And whose princes eat in the morning,* that is, at the time which ought to be devoted to serious and important business.

Ver. 17. "A noble," not merely by birth, but in disposition and customs. The words *for strength and not for drunkenness,* (or gluttony,) show clearly enough what the writer has in mind. He does not refer to invigoration, but to intemperate drinking, and the pleasures connected therewith.

Ver. 18. Luther remarks—"he introduces a proverb, as if he meant to say,—in such a kingdom or land, where the great lords and mighty men seek their own profit, and the king is without sense, things go on as they do in the house of an idle man, who might frequently repair his roof and protect it against the weather for a penny, but lets the rain come through till at last the entire building is damaged. For where the master of a house is not industrious, always building and repairing, one damage is sure to follow on the heels of another." The house is the edifice of state. *Double rottenness,* is great rottenness, as Kushan Rishataim, "double wickedness," means great wickedness; in Ezekiel xlvii. 9, "the double stream" means "the strong stream," and as in Jeremiah l. 21, מרתים "double apostacy," signifies great apostacy. שפלות "low place," designates here, a miserable reduced condition.

Ver. 19. *Bread they make to laughter.* Here it is quite clear that the author is not giving general observations, but depicting things as they really and truly existed. Hitzig says, "That which in ver. 16 was not affirmed, to wit, that the home of the speaker was such an unhappy country, is here added." *Laughter* is used in chap. ii. 2, for extravagant merriment. Elsewhere לשחוק always means "to laughter," and consequently may not in this place be translated, "amidst laughter." If היה לשחוק signifies, "to become laughter," then will עשה לשחוק mean "to make to laughter,"—to laughter, not in the passive, but in the active sense. Besides, עשה along with ל is employed in other places to designate that into which anything is made: compare Isaiah xliv. 17, "the remainder he maketh to a God," לאל עשה שאריתו. Bread, which should serve to give strength, serves them only as a vehicle of

laughter. Their meal times are scenes of excess. *And wine maketh glad the living.* This is plainly a dictum taken from the mouths of the "merry carousers." It is a compendium of Isaiah xxii. 13, (compare 1 Cor. where the godless say, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." *And money answereth all things:* ענה with the accusative signifies "to answer," (Job xxxi. 35,) and then "to be answerable for," (Job. xxxiii. 13.) Money is the answer to all charges, the apology for all crimes: he who has money may allow himself any liberty. ענה cannot signify "to afford, to confer."

Ver. 20. The author now assigns the reason why, in the part immediately preceding, and in fact throughout the whole book, he had spoken of the circumstances of the Persian Empire in such a vague and indistinct manner. Openness under a tyrannical government is dangerous and ruinous. Ewald renders the sense as follows, "as well on account of the great danger of treachery, as in consideration that *duty*, (chap. viii. 2,) forbids it, we should never permit ourselves to curse our rulers even in the greatest secrecy." The advice, however, is rather a simple rule of prudence, and may be subsumed under that saying of our Lord's, γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις. Only a false explanation can find, in chap. viii. 2, a reference to the duty of which Ewald speaks. Nothing is said of such a duty in the entire book: on the contrary, the writer says the strongest possible things against the heathen tyrannical rule—covertly, however, and so that he could nowhere be laid hold of. It would, in truth, have been perverse to judge an Asiatic tyranny by the principles laid down in Romans xiii;—principles which even in our own day do not hold good for Greeks in relation to the Turks. The word מדע belongs to the language in its post-exile period, and occurs elsewhere only in the sense "insight, understanding:" so also the Chaldee מנדע from which it is derived. Here it is usually explained by "consciousness, thought." This meaning, however, besides being uncertain, does not appear to suit the connection; the word קול shows that the writer is not treating of mere thoughts,—besides that, the sphere of thoughts is not accessible to espionage, which is here the sole subject of consideration. It is the simplest course to understand by מדע, "study;" just as in Latin, *studium* is used both of studies, and of the

place where studies are carried on. The mention of "the study" cannot surprise, if we examine chap. xii. 12: it is moreover very suitably employed in connection with "bed-chamber," of which mention is made also in 2 Kings vi. 12, "Elisha, the prophet, telleth the King of Israel the words which thou speakest in thy bed-chamber." The rich man is the Persian, (compare chap. v. 11.) On the words, "for the birds of heaven, etc," the Berleburger Bible remarks, "it may come out by no visible medium, as quickly and marvellously, as if a bird flying by or seated before the window had picked it up."

CHAPTER XI. 1-3.

In view of the threatened judgments of God, which should soon cast down the proud tree of the Persian Empire, it behoved them not to fix their hearts on uncertain riches, but rather to seek by compassionate and benevolent conduct to gain the favour of God who is able to deliver his children from their troubles:—such is the admonition addressed by the author to his narrow-hearted, avaricious, and sordid contemporaries.

Ver. 1. *Send thy bread on the water, for thou shalt find it after many days.* Ver. 2. *Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be on the earth.* Ver. 3. *If the clouds be full of rain they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall, be it toward the south or be it toward the north, in the place where it falleth, there it shall be.*

Ver. 1. In the presence of great catastrophes, earthly possessions are of very little value, for they may easily be overwhelmed therein; on the contrary, that God should be gracious towards us is of the last importance. This the author admonishes us to secure by benevolence, and by putting completely away that covetous narrow-heartedness, which, in times of distress, so easily creeps into the heart. The image is borrowed from sea-trading. In that, the temporary sacrifice of one's property brings in a rich reward, even though after a long interval: (according to 1 Kings x. 22, Solomon's vessels returned

from Tarshish once in three years, bringing with them rich cargoes). So is it also in connection with benevolence: in His own good time the Lord restores that which may have been given to sufferers for His name's sake. If one casts one's bread on the water in the usual external sense, it may very easily itself become water should the ship perish; it is in fact but a mere experiment: but when we cast our bread on the water in the spiritual sense, a return is certain; that which we have staked is sure to come back again, even though after a long season. Jerome says, "cum dies judicii advenerit, multo amplius quam dederat recepturus:" and Cartwright, "tametsi enim non raro fit, ut deus compensationem in longum tempus rejiciat, tandem tamen mercedem in hac vita, certe quidem in futura reponet." We have here, in an abbreviated form, the comparison so frequently made, and which is, "whoso giveth alms is like a merchant who sends his property over the sea." Verse 2, which gives the real substance, the idea, contained in the figurative representation, shows that we must not limit our attention to the common kind of trade. מים על פני is used of navigation also in Job xxiv. 18, where it is said of pirates—"swift is that one on the mirror of the water." Parallel in point of significance are the following passages:—Psalm xli. 1, 2, "Blessed is he who acts prudently towards the wretched: in the day of adversity shall the Lord deliver him. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, he is blessed in the land, and thou mayest not deliver him unto the will of his enemies:"—Proverbs xix. 17, "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and his gift will he pay him again:"—and 1 Timothy vi. 18, 19, where the apostle prescribes to the rich, εὐμεταδότους εἶναι, κοινωνικούς, ἀποθησαυρίζοντας, ἑαυτοῖς θεμέλιον καλὸν εἰς τὸ μέλλον. Luke vi. 38, xvi. 9; Galatians vi. 9.

Ver. 2. *Give a portion,* that is, of thy bread (compare Isaiah lviii. 7, 10.) The addition of the words, "also to eight," serves the purpose of indicating that the number seven did not mark the limit of the extent of our benevolence:—not, "at the utmost, seven," but, "seven and more." *For thou knowest not, etc.,* and there, all depends on making to thyself friends of the unrighteous mammon. Cartwright observes, "Ad hanc autem munificentiam te excitare debet rerum om-

nium Europæa veluti inconstantia et incertitudo, quid aut de te, aut divitiis, quas possides, fiet: ut illud merito in lucro deputes, quod in pauperum subsidium conferendo veluti e flamma et incendio eripueris." In point of thought the following passages may be adduced as parallels; Psalm cxii. 9, "he disperseth, he giveth to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn is exalted with honour,"—words which, by the way, belong also to the period of the rule of the Persians, and which teach the Jews that if they were pervaded by a liberal spirit, they would at some future time certainly rise to honour:—and then further Matthew v. 42, *τῷ αἰτοῦντι σε δίδου.*

Ver. 3. *Clouds* and *rain* are a usual image of the judgments of God, and of the troubles sent by him. Compare in respect of "clouds," Isaiah xix. 1; Psalm xcvii. 2; Psalm xviii. 10; Nahum i. 3; Jeremiah iv. 13; Revelations i. 7: in regard to "rain," compare Song of Solomon, ii. 11; Isaiah iv. 6; Matthew vii. 24, 25. Clouds and rain are employed as designations of troubles also in chap. xii. 2. The thought is identical with that expressed in the words of the Lord—"where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." When the measure of sin is filled up, and the clouds of divine wrath are therefore gathered together, the storm will inevitably break; in the day when such an outbreak is imminent, every one should ask earnestly in his heart, "how shall I receive thee, and how shall I meet thee?" in order that he may not be swept away by the wickedness of the world.—The connection between the first and second part of the verse is to be explained from the fact that in heavy storms trees are not unfrequently cast down by the lightning and gusts of wind (compare Psalm xxix.) The tree is here that of the Persian Empire. No human power will be in a position to delay its fall when it has once begun, or to raise it up again after it is down. He who is judged by God remains judged. Trees are a common symbol of the mighty. In Isaiah x. 18, the trees of Assyria are its great men. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon is represented under the image of a proud tree in Daniel iv. 19—"the tree art thou, O king." In Ezekiel xxxi. 3 ff., Assyria is introduced as a cedar of Lebanon, with goodly foliage, and its top reaching unto the clouds. See also Revelations vii. 1.

VERSES 4-6.

The author now enters the lists to battle with the temptation to despairing inactivity which arose out of the circumstances of the time. Their unfavourableness should move us on the contrary to redoubled activity.

Ver. 4. *He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.* Ver. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, like the bones in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the work of God who maketh all.* Ver. 6. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Ver. 4. The unfavourable circumstances of the time exerted a crippling influence. Men were dejected, and gave themselves up to listlessness and despair—they were inclined to lay their hands in their bosom and wait for better times. Against this the author here raises his warning voice. Under all circumstances we should do our duty and let God care for us. Sowing and reaping are employed here after the example of Psalm cxxvi. 5, to designate *activity*. To the wind, which may easily blow away the seed, and to the clouds which threaten to injure the harvests, correspond the unfavourable circumstances of the time. In explaining the abbreviated comparison used by the author, Cartwright says, "whoso layeth his hands in his bosom, because the circumstances of the time are unfavourable, perinde esse acsi agricola sementem facere recusaret, quia ventus paulo vehementius flat: unde fit ut de die in diem sementem proferens seminandi tempus præterfluat." With a special application to the preaching of the word, Jerome remarks, "opportune, importune suo tenore Dei sermo est prædicandus, nec fidei tempore, adversariarum nubium consideranda tempestas.—Absque consideratione ergo nubium et timore ventorum in mediis tempestatibus seminandum est. Nec dicendum, illud tempus commodum, hoc inutile, quum ignoremus, quæ via, et quæ voluntas sit spiritus universa dispensantis."

Ver. 5. Things turn out very often quite otherwise than

the understanding of men anticipated. For this reason we should avoid puzzling our minds much with the circumstances of the time, we should do what God commands and leave results to him. There is no doubt that our Lord alluded to the first words of the verse, when he said in John iii. 8, of the wind οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει. *Like the bones,* or, in other words, as it is with the bones. The only point of comparison is the invisibility. The principal passage in this connection is Psalm cxxxix. 15, "My bones were not hid from thee when I was made in secret, when I was wrought in the depths of the earth." Bone is in the Hebrew so designated from the strength which it has, and, as the most important part of the body, is used to represent the whole.

Ver. 6. Be incessantly active! Precisely in troublous and wretched times should we be most restlessly active, for then many things that we do may fail of success. The more doubtful the results of our undertakings, the less should we be disposed to lay our hands in our bosom.

VERSES 7, 8.

Better to be dead! So were people exclaiming on all hands at the time of the author. He, on the contrary, insists on the importance of life as a noble gift of God, and warns against thanklessly regarding it in a mistaken light.

Ver. 7. *And sweet is the light, and a pleasant thing is it for the eyes to see the sun.* Ver. 8. *For if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness that they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity.*

Ver. 7. However great are the sufferings of this life, however manifold is the vanity to which the world has been subjected since the day spoken of in Genesis iii., however sad are the circumstances of the time, it still remains true, that life is a good thing; and when a gloomy and depressing mood gets the upper hand in the Church, it is the task of the word of God to impress upon it this truth.

Ver. 8. Christ has brought life and immortality to light. For him who is in Christ the argument has no longer the

weight it had under the old covenant: we can no more allow the light of this life to be darkened by the shadow of Sheol. To be weary of life is, however, still a sin, even under the new Covenant. A pious heart will seek out the bright sides of our earthly existence, and contemplate them with sincere thankfulness.

CHAPTER XI. 9.—CHAPTER XII. 7.

At a time when dark discontent had got the mastery over the minds of men, the Spirit of God exhorts them through the writer of this book to enjoy cheerfully divine gifts, admonishing them, however, in order to prevent carnal misunderstandings, to keep in view the account they will have one day to give to the Holy God, of all their doings:—he warns them to remember their Creator, who alone has the power to render their life prosperous and happy. In depicting the joylessness of the age, he shows how fitting it is to enter betimes on this path of self-surrender to the Creator, to consecrate even the bloom of youth to Him, lest when we arrive at the end of our days, after a miserable and curse-laden life—(and apart from fellowship with God there is nought but misery and curse)—we should be compelled, looking back on a wasted existence, to cry in despair, "too late." The whole concludes with a reference to the judgment awaiting men after death.

Chap. xi. 9. *Rejoice O young man in thy youth: and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know that for all this God will bring thee into judgment.* Ver. 10. *And remove discontent from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.* Chap. xii. 1. *And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* Ver. 2. *Before the sun be darkened, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, and the clouds return after the rain.* Ver. 3. *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are become few, and those that look out of the windows be*

darkened. Ver. 4. *And the doors are shut in the streets, in that the sound of the grinding is low, and he riseth up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of song are bent down.* Ver. 5. *Also they are afraid of that which is high, and terrors,* (are for them,) *in the way, and the almond tree flourisheth, and the locust becometh burdensome, and desire faileth, because man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about in the street.* Ver. 6. *Before then the silver cord be removed, and the golden bowl haste away, and the pitcher be broken at the fountain, and the wheel be dashed to pieces at the cistern.* Ver. 7. *And the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth to God who gave it.*

Chap. xi. 9. The writer directs his discourse to the *youth* because he has still to *choose* his path in life, and good advice is consequently most appropriate in his case. *Let thy heart cheer thee:* the heart is mentioned because it is the fountain from which cheerfulness is, as it were, diffused over the whole man: compare Proverbs xiv. 30, "a sound heart is the life of the body:" and chap. xv. 13, "a merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance."* Many of the older commentators look upon this summons to cheerfulness as *ironical;* so that it would be substantially a dissuasion therefrom.† There is, however, no satisfactory reason for taking such a view, especially when we bear in mind that the disease of the age was not *excess,* but dull *melancholy.* It is furthermore inconsistent with a whole number of parallel passages, in which men are exhorted to the cheerful enjoyment of God's gifts. And lastly, in verse 10, to a very forced explanation of which that view would lead, by בעס, we should then be compelled to understand "passionateness," to which youth is specially inclined, and by רעה "badness" in general.‡ The

* Geiersays: "Ex corde vel animo de amore dei certo redundet pia ac honesta refectio in totum corpus."

† For example, Cartwright also observes: "In priore dehortatio adhibetur, primum tropo ironias exornata: et deinde simplici oratione exposita. . . Nec enim oleum igni addit sed contra frenum juveni injicit."

‡ The fundamental idea of the book, to which the present verse owes its origin, was quite correctly perceived and admirably presented by Witsius in his Essay on chap. xii. 1, in the Misc. s. ii., p. 165, "toto libro nil nisi virtus docetur, non fucata illa, austera, tetrica, quæ ex sordibus et illuvie ac ἀφειδίᾳ τοῦ σώματος, laudem captat.: sed ingenua, liberalis, hilaris quæ deprehensa rerum cæterarum inanitate felicitatem suam quærit et invenit in conscientia

words, "*walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes*," would be at variance with the passage, Numbers xv. 39, to which allusion is probably here made—"ye shall remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and ye shall not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring"—were they not defined and limited by the succeeding warning—"but know, etc."* There is undoubtedly a difference between the two passages. In the one only unallowed merriness is *forbidden*: in the other permitted merriness is recommended,—to a generation, namely, which had lost its joy in life, which was consumed by a murmuring disposition, and which tried to force God to redeem it by means of a gloomy and rigid asceticism. Cheerfulness, here, is not merely permitted: it is commanded, and represented as an essential element of piety. Emphasis must be laid equally on the word "walk" and on the word "know." Even in Leviticus xiii. 12 and Deuteronomy xxviii. 34, מראה עינים signifies that which we see with our eyes. The Masorites wished to change the plural, which refers to the multiplicity of the objects of sight, into the singular, because they falsely supposed מראה to denote the "act of sight." To walk in that which we see with our eyes is to be mentally occupied with it, to have pleasure in it, in contradiction to either a strict and gloomy asceticism or a discontented dullness and insensibility. *Into the judgment*, which will be carried on according to the standard of God's revealed law. Whatever is in opposition to this must inevitably be expiated by punishment,—by punishment, too, which is executed not only in the future world, but affects the whole of our present life. For God is angry every day (Psalm vii. 12).

Ver. 10. The last verse exhorted to a divine cheerfulness: this verse dissuades from that which stands in its way. כעס signifies "discontent," that is, with God and his leadings. That poor age was rich in this particular (compare chap. vii.

tranquilla ac læta et usu bonorum ex favore divino provenientium. Ita tamen ut memor fluxæ hujus ac lubricæ vitæ et imminentis judicii omnia cum reverentia summi Numinis peragat."

* Jerome says, "rursum ne putaretur hæc dicens hominem ad luxuriam provocare et in Epicuri dogma corruere, suspicionem hanc abstulit inferens: Et scito, quoniam super omnibus his adducet te deus in judicium. Sic inquit abutere mundi rebus, ut scias te in ultimo judicandum."

9). We meet with it also in the contemporary Malachi: see chap. iii. 14, "ye say, it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we keep his ordinances and walk in filth before the Lord of hosts?" *And put away evil from thy body.* Discontent has the effect, at the same time, of rendering the body wretched (Psalm vi. 8). Schmidt remarks, "afflictiones et ærumnas, quæ ex tristitia animi in corpus redundant carnemque consumunt." To this we must add the mortifications resorted to in order to extort redemption from God: compare the passage from Malachi just quoted and Isaiah lviii. 3, "wherefore do we fast, and thou seest not, wherefore do we afflict our soul and thou knowest not?" The exhortation, not wilfully to rob themselves by dark melancholy of that which God graciously presents to them, is grounded on the consideration that youth, the time when men are most capable of enjoyment, is vain and quickly passes by. שחרות, "the time of dawn," "youth," occurs only here, and is a word that was probably formed by the author himself. This is rendered probable by the preceding term ילדות, which serves as an explanation.

Chap. xii. 1. *And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* The Berleburger Bible remarks, "in the noble time of youth turn betimes to God, and do not sacrifice its bloom to the devil: do not devote merely the dregs of thy years to God and put off till late the work of conversion." In order to be happy, it is not enough that we form the resolution to be cheerful (chap. xi. 9), and to put away discontent, (chap. xi. 10). With such a determination, a hearty piety must go hand in hand. Man could not be considered as bearing the image of God if it were possible for him to spend a joyous existence without remembering his Creator. Truly rejoice can he only who is in his true element; and man is only in his true element when he gives himself up to devotion, and thus returns to the origin and source of his being. To this must be added, that whoso apostatizes from his Creator becomes necessarily involved in the divine judgments; for the Lord must have his due from all who bear his image, either in their destruction or their voluntary return to himself. Divine condemnation renders cheerfulness impossible. The summons to "remember our Creator" does not stand in contrast to that other one, "let

thy heart cheer thee:" they rather go hand in hand with each other. Their relation might be expressed in this way—"and *in order* that thou mayest be able to rejoice, and to put away discontent, remember thy Creator." Ewald renders wrongly—"*yet* think." The words, "thy *Creator*," give the reason why we should *remember*. It is unnatural not to think of Him in whom we live and move and have our being; and such unnatural conduct brings its own punishment,—misery is its inseparable companion. In the Berleburger Bible we read, "When the Preacher says, 'Remember thy Creator,' it is more than if he had merely mentioned *God*. He indicates quite distinctly the right that God has to man, the benefits which God has conferred on man, and man's consequent duty to recognise and act according to his entire dependence on God." The plural in בוראיך, in the same way as that in "Elohim," draws attention to the fulness and the wealth of the divine nature, to God's majesty and glory. For remarks on such plural designations of God, (as for example, Joshua xxiv. 19, where God is called קדשים, and Proverbs ix. 10), see chap. v. 7. *Before the evil days come*, etc. What we are to understand by the "days of evil or suffering," is made clear by the following verses. They stand for a *joyless old age*. If we fail to remember our Creator in youth, the period between it and old age, the time when we are most capable of happiness, is taken up with misery, and after our susceptibility to pleasure has ceased, we are forced to look with sorrow on a wasted existence. Cartwright mistakes the right point of view when he says—"before old age reaches thee, which by reason of numerous weaknesses and burdens is less fitted for the learning or exercise of piety." As is expressly said, age is here brought under consideration, not because then the spiritual powers are deadened, but because it brings on the "days of evil," because all joy in our earthly existence is then irrecoverably lost if not previously gained possession of—a thing which is impossible apart from the fear of God. Knobel's observation however is quite incorrect:—"that we must not connect the second part of this verse exclusively with the admonition to fear God, but more particularly with the summons to enjoyment about which Koheleth is here chiefly concerned, 'enjoy thyself before, etc., but

not in such a way that thou make thyself a fool.'" To such violent explanations are men driven who are incapable of grasping the thought, that Jehovah is the Alpha and Omega of our earthly existence, and that a right relation to him is the condition and foundation of all happiness and all joy. In the following verses a picture is presented of a joyless old age drawn in the lively colours of youth, in order that the exhortation to remember the Creator in the days of youth might sink the more deeply into the heart. How mournful a thing must it be to pass into the ranks of those who are here described, without having tasted of the feast of joys prepared by the Creator for all those who remember Him.

Ver. 2. In the first half of this verse, age is brought forward as the time when sun, moon, and stars become dark. The lights of heaven really shine only for the *happy*. When the eye is no longer sunlike, the sun is, as it were, gone down. For this reason in Old Testament delineations of adversity we so often read of the destruction of the heavenly lights. Isaiah, for example, when describing in chap. v. 30, the heavy sufferings which were about to fall upon the land because of its alienation from God, says—"the light is darkened in the heavens thereof." Jeremiah in chap. iv. 33, picturing the judgments which threatened Judah, says, "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void, and the heavens they had no lights:" (compare Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8; Amos viii. 9, 10; Micah iii. 6; Revelations vi. 12.) With the sun is connected "the light," the Scripture symbol of salvation and happiness, for the purpose of indicating why the sun, moon, and stars are introduced, and what is their significance. In the second half of the verse, age appears as the time when clouds return after rain, that is, when one trouble succeeds to the other. Dark clouds are often used as an image of troubles: so also rain in Ezekiel xiii. 11-13; xxxviii. 22; Song of Solomon ii. 11. Luther observes that, "the Holy Scriptures call consolation and prosperity, *light*, and troubles, *darkness* or night. The author means therefore to say—before the age comes when neither sun nor stars shall shine on thee, when the clouds shall return after rain, that is, when one trouble shall follow on the heels of another. For young boys, for young men, for men who are in the very prime of life,

there is still a measure of joy: in their case it is still a fact that, after rain comes beautiful sunshine; that is, in other words, although they have times of trouble, they have also again days of joy and consolation. But age has no joy: clouds come after the rain: one misfortune succeeds another, one storm follows another." The power to suffer is exhausted in old age, the heart is already broken: that is however not the only consideration here: God's will is to melt down his own people completely before the end of life, and to give to the wicked a foretaste of hell. That which is here said of age in general, holds especially good of the age of the godless, which the author had principally in view.* It did not, however, accord with his purpose, to mention, that as the lights of this world grow dark, the celestial divine light shines all the more brightly on a godly old age.†

Ver. 3. The body in which the spirit dwells is elsewhere, also, represented under the image of a *house:* (see Job iv. 19; 2 Corinthians v. 1.) The *watchmen* of the house are the *arms,* by which everything inimical and destructive is warded of. זוע in kal occurs only here and in Esther v. 9: in the Chaldee it is frequently used. The *strong men* are the feet. These are introduced as the seat of the strength of a man, also in Psalm cxlvii. 10, "he delighteth not in the strength of a horse, he hath no pleasure in the legs of a man,"—and in their strength,—as we may add, supplementing from the first clause of the verse. The *millers,* (feminine,) or *the grinders,* are the teeth. The feminine form was chosen because grinding (with the handmill) was usually an occupation of women, (Exodus xi. 5; Isaiah xlvii. 2.) The teeth *make holiday* or *cease,* that is, are no longer able to fulfil their task, because they *have become few:* if they are to be properly active, their number must be full. בטל as a Hebrew word, "to cease to make holiday," occurs only in this place: in Aramaic it is frequently

* Cartwright says, "quod quidem, ut fere senibus omnibus evenit, ita potissimum his, qui luxu et libidine juventutem transegerunt. Effœtum enim corpus et nauseabundum senectuti tradunt: ita ut in illis pluviam excipiat nubes, nubem grando, grandinem gelu, donec eum deus ad barathrum condemnationis detruserit.

† Cartwright observes, "tametsi visibilis sol illis occidit, tamen sol justitiæ Christus illorum in animis adolescentiæ exoriens, in senectuti altior in hujus vitæ hemispherio assurgens, lumen suum duplicabit. Prov. iv. 18."

found, (see for example, Ezra iv. 24.) The Piel of מעט is only used here, and that with an intransitive meaning. The Piel denotes *enhancement, very few. Those that look out of the windows,* are the eyes. Hitzig remarks, "as at first, two masculines, which in conception belong to each other, namely, arms and legs, are connected; so in the next place, two feminines, to wit, teeth and eyes; as also in portions of the law, (Exodus xxi. 24; Deuteronomy xix. 21,) eyes and teeth, hands and feet, are co-ordinated with each other."

Ver. 4. By *the doors in the streets,* some organ must here be designated, which is the medium of intercourse with the external world,—one, too, which is divided into two parts, as is clear from the use of the dual דלתים. The mention of the *eyes,* which goes immediately before, would at once suggest the thought of *ears:* this moreover suits admirably the connection with the voice—"in that the voice of the mill becomes weak"—they are less able to hear, and to make themselves intelligible. According to others, the *mouth* is intended, and the dual form דלתים is chosen with reference to the two lips—a form which is used also of the jaws of the Leviathan in Job xli. 6. See the Berleburger Bible, where we read—"through the mouth man's heart goes forth and is seen and known by means of what he utters." The image of doors is used also of the mouth in Micah vii. 5, "preserve the doors of thy mouth." On this view the words, "in that the voice of the mill becomes weak," would assign the reason for the closing of the doors, as much as to say, "they scarcely open the mouth any more because it has become difficult for them to speak." But it is more appropriate to apply the description *being shut* to that *hardness of hearing,* which is so characteristic of old age that it can scarcely be absent. If the teeth are the *grinders,* the mouth must be the *mill.* שְׁפַל is *Infin. nominasc.* from שפל, "to be low;" signifying when used of the voice, to be, as it were, depressed, deadened, weak. The subject in יקום is "the old man," who is spoken of in the context. He rises at the voice of the bird, so soon as the birds begin to sing, that is, very early in the morning: age has no sleep.* The men-

* Cartwright says, "summo mane, quum avicularum cantillationes incipiunt, irrequietus senex, somni expers, membra levabit thoro, ceteræ etiam familiæ

tion of the "voice of the bird" suggests the remark, that the old man has even lost all capacity for, and pleasure in song; a remark which coincides with 2 Samuel xix. 35, where Barzillai says to David—"can thy servant still taste what I eat or drink, can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" The term "daughter" is used to designate that which belongs to a thing: for example, the daughters of Rabbah, in Jeremiah xlix. 2, are the places which belong to Rabbah. Here accordingly the qualities which belong to song, the singing qualities, are personified as the daughters of song: Aquila, *πάντα τὰ τῆς ᾠδῆς.*

Ver. 5. *Also*—to mention this further characteristic of their miserable condition—*they are afraid of everything which is high, and terrors are in the way.* Where there is little strength every height is dreadful, and defenceless impotence sees terrors wherever it goes and stands. *And the almond tree blooms.* That the almond tree is here used as a symbol of that watchfulness with which old age is visited, is suggested even by the etymology. שָׁקֵד, originally the name of the tree, not of the fruit, to which, strictly viewed, it is inappropriate, and can therefore be only secondarily applied, is a poetical designation of the almond: the real name in natural history is לוּז. It is called properly the "waking tree," because it first awakes from the sleep of winter. Theophrastus says in Hist. Plant. i. 15, of the alum tree, *πρωὶ βλαστάνει.*† To this we may add that in Jeremiah i. 11, the almond tree is in like manner employed as a symbol of watching:—that passage may be regarded as commentary to the present verse. Why mention is made of *blooming*, Pliny teaches us in the Hist. Nat. 16, 25: according to him, the almond tree blossoms first of all trees,—"floret prima omnium amygdala mense Januario" According to the explanation just given, which is adopted by the Septuagint, (*καὶ ἀνθήσῃ τὸ ἀμύγδαλον,*) by the Vulgate, (et florebit amygdalus,) and by the Syriac, יָנֵא is the Hiphil form, and from נוּץ, which is used in the sense of "blossom," even in the

quietem turbans. Nam uti intempestivus somnus, ita et intempestiva vigilia comites aut sequelæ senectutis sunt."

* Gesenius. "שָׁקֵד amygdala arbor, ita dicta, quod omnium arborum prima e somno hiberno expergiscitur et velut vigil ceteris plantis advigilat."

the Song of Solomon, (see chap. vi. 11 ; vii. 13.) These passages agree too closely with the present verse to permit of a separation between them. To the blossoming pomegranite trees there, corresponds the blossoming almond tree here. We need not be surprised at the א which has been interpolated : it is found elsewhere in the usage of a latter period, (see Ewald, § 83 c.) Objections which have been raised, do not touch the explanation in itself, but only the false turn given to it when the blossoming almond tree is made to represent the grey hair of old men. In such a case, there is of course the plain objection, that the blossom of the almond tree is not white. According to others, ינאץ is the Hiphil future of נאץ, "to despise :" the toothless old man despises the pleasant tasted almond. But even as regards the form, there are difficulties in the way of this explanation ;—for example, the vowel point Kametz ; and the Hiphil, which occurs nowhere else :*—besides, the meaning of the verb נאץ does not suit, for נאץ is not a simple refusal, but one connected with scorn and contempt. To this we may add, that the thought is rather too far-fetched. *And the locust shows itself troublesome.* סבל, "to press heavily on any one," in Piel, (which does not occur,) "to lay a burden on any one;" (Pual is used in Psalm cxliv. 14,) and in Hithpael, "to show oneself burdensome, to be troublesome," (compare Gesenius' Thesaurus.) Locusts must not be taken here, as Gesenius and others take them, in their proper sense, viz., in the sense of an excellent species of food, which the old man must renounce because he is no longer able to bear it.† For locusts were in any circumstances but poor nutriment, taken only by those who either had no other, or wished to mortify themselves ; and then the expression, "become burdensome or troublesome," would be out of place. The locust must rather be employed figuratively, in correspondence with the predominantly

* Hitzig is obliged to confess that the form as it here lies before us cannot be derived from נאץ—"the pointing is without doubt not intended for the Hiphil of נאץ, (that is for יַאֲצִיץ instead of יַנְאִיץ) which never occurs elsewhere, but for the Hiphil of נצץ, to wit, יַנֵּץ, as was also the view of the authors of the versions led astray by שקד itself, (compare Numbers xvii. 23.)"

† Molesta est seni locusta, quia ægre ab illo manducatur et concoquitur, quanquam grati saporis

symbolical character of the entire description. If this is the case, there can be no doubt as to the sense. The most prominent characteristic of locusts, is "devouring;" compare 2 Chronicles vii. 13, "I command the locusts, (הגב, as here,) to devour the land." For this reason, wherever locusts are alluded to in a figurative sense in the Scriptures, they designate hostile ravages and destruction. Here accordingly we must understand by them, the forces hostile to life, which consume it especially in old age. *And desire faileth:* Luther gives the sense accurately as follows, "an old man has pleasure in nothing." אביונה from אבה, "to wish, to will," occurs nowhere else, but still the derivation is quite legitimate. To be rejected, is the limitation to one particular kind of desire.* The explanation, "caper," although widely spread, must still be characterised as without foundation.† The fact that some old translations have hit upon it, (the Septuagint, for example, which was followed by the Syriac and the Vulgate,) offers no sure support for it. It has been sought, but in vain, to draw confirmations of this usage from the Talmud and the Rabbins.‡ "Appetitus, concupiscentia," which is the simplest explanation, suits the context admirably, and is recommended also by the parallel expression of Barzillai,—"can I still distinguish between good and evil, can I taste what I eat and drink, etc.?" The Hiphil form of פרר signifies elsewhere always "to reduce to nought, to destroy," and must not therefore here without further reasons be rendered, "become nought." *Desire* refusing its services, reduces the enjoyments to nought, which it might have afforded us. *For man goeth to his eternal home;* and of that all these things are forerunners—they are symptoms that life is shortly to cease.‖

The *eternal house* can only be the grave, out of which there is never a return to this earthly life: compare Job vii.

* So the Chaldee, "prohibeberis a concubitu;" correctly on the contrary the Greek Venet., παύσῃ ἡ ὄρεξις. Abulvalid renders, "cessabit concupiscentia;" Rabbi Parchon explains the word by תאוה.

† Gesenius, "et irrita erit capparis, *i. e.*, vim amplius habebit capparis, neque in cibi desiderio movendo, neque in Veneris concupiscentia provocanda."

‡ Compare for a contrary view, Winzer's Comm. on xi. 9,—xii. 7, in the "Comm. Theol." of Rosenmüller, Fuldner and Maurer i. 1, p. 95.

‖ Geier, "nec mirum est omnem evanescere appetitum, quia abit et magis magisque sensim occidit ejusmodi homo."

10, "he will not return to his house, nor will his place know him again." We find the same expression used of it in Tobias iii. 6, also. *And the mourners go about in the streets.* סבבו is the *preter. proph.* That which is impending in the immediate future is anticipated in spirit. What is said here is equivalent to, "they will soon go about in the streets." The reference is to the mournings which took place at funerals, (compare Amos v. 16.)

Ver. 6. *Before the silver cord be removed.* The words are connected with the admonition at the commencement of the chapter, "remember thy Creator." The *cord* denotes the *thread of life*, the continuity of existence. That the cord is of silver is a sign that life is a noble possession: compare chap xi. 7, "sweet is the light, and pleasant is it for the eyes to see the sun."* The Niphal form of רהק "to become far" is never used. As invariably happens in such cases, the vowels belong to the marginal reading. We must read יִרָהֵק, "removed afar off, departed," (longe recessit, discessit.) The Masoretic conjecture is the less to be trusted as the meaning, "be broken," ascribed to נרתק, is by no means certain. The verb which signifies "to bind, to enchain," cannot, in Niphal, which otherwise never occurs, mean "to be unchained, torn loose," as Ewald would have it. רהק, "to remove," and רוץ "to run, to haste away," correspond admirably to each other.—*And the golden bowl haste away.* Many interpreters consider that רוץ here stands for רצץ, "till the golden bowl be broken," Septuagint, *καὶ συντριβῇ τὸ ἀνθέμιον του χρυσίου.* Elsewhere, however, the spheres of both the verbs רצץ and רוץ remain distinct. Even in Isaiah xlii. 4, רוץ retains its meaning "run," (compare my *Christology* on that passage.) The former of the two verbs always signifies elsewhere "to break," never "to be broken." רוץ "to run, to escape," forms quite a suitable parallel with רהק "to become far;" so also in the second half of the verse נרץ "to be beaten to pieces" with נשבר "to be broken." The use of נרץ immediately after shows that תרץ may not be referred back to רצץ, for the recurrence of the same verb would be awkward. גלה means properly

* Jerome says, "funiculus autem argenti caudidam hanc vitam et spiramen quod nobis de cœlo tribuitur, ostendit."

"source," and is equivalent to גַּל in the Song of Solomon iv. 12. It is used in the same manner in Joshua xv. 19, and Judges i. 15. Then in Zechariah iv. 3 it denotes the reservoir out of which the oil flows into the seven lamps of the candlestick, (the masculine form גֻּל in chap. iv. 2 is chosen only on account of the suffix.) On that passage in Zechariah, is based, as it would seem, the one now under notice. Corresponding with the "cord," life, now, as the ground and source of all particular manifestations thereof, is represented under the image of an oil-bowl. Four figurative designations of life are connected together in this verse. In the passage adduced from Zechariah the remark was made, "that the candlesticks being entirely of the noblest metal, namely of gold, indicates the glory of the church." Here also we are taught that the life which God has adorned with such noble gifts, and to which he has appointed such high tasks, is a noble possession, in that the oil-bowl is described as being golden. *And the pitcher is broken to pieces at the well.* The pitcher is the image of individual life, the well is the image of the *general* life. Hitzig justly compares with this the *drawing* of breath, although that is not the whole, but only one single act, by which we take to ourselves something out of the great general treasure from which all individuals are supplied with that which is necessary to their subsistence. *And the wheel is broken to pieces at the cistern.* The cistern, or fountain, is the world. Life is represented under the image of a wheel because of its rapid motion.* In James iii. 6 it is said of the tongue, ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα, καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως· The first words are based on chap. v. 5 of this book, "Let not thy mouth make thy flesh sinful:" the second clause, referring back to the present verse, represents life under the image of a wheel, (γένεσις, Bengel, "constitutio naturalis," i. 23 et vita, compare Judith xii. 19; πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς γενέσεως μου, Schneckenburger on the passage.) If the pitcher is one day inevitably to be broken at the well, and the wheel to be beaten to pieces at the cistern, it surely behoves us to seek earnestly and betimes for such a founda-

* גלגל, Gesenius, "res volubilis, quæ cito et continuo volvitur."

tion of our life as shall not be subjected to such changes.* The fear of death is legitimate so long as we have not reached this aim. The Berleburger Bible says, "the author having described here the accidents which precede death, and at the same time death itself: in the following verse he informs us what will become of body and soul after death."

Ver. 7. *The dust*, that is, as the Berleburger Bible remarks, "this earthly body, which is so called in order to show partly its origin, and partly also its weakness and littleness." Allusion is made to Genesis iii. 19, "till thou return to the earth, for from it wast thou taken, for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." This passage contains only part of the truth. Its design was to humble man to the dust, who wished to be equal with God: hence, of the two sides of which his nature is constituted, only the one, the earthly side, is specially mentioned. According to Genesis ii. 7, there is in man a divine element, a breath from God, alongside of the earthly. Chap. i. 26 teaches that man is created in God's image, in distinction from all the rest of creation. In this aspect of his being he cannot be subjected to destruction, he must participate in the imperishableness of God. When the author says, that the spirit returns to God who gave it, he advances nothing new, he does but complement Genesis iii. 19 from the two passages just adduced. That the spirit of man does not perish with the body is here, in agreement with chap. iii. 2, (compare also chap. iii. 11,) most decidedly taught. Conscious, however, of the boundary lines separating the productions of "wisdom" from the outpourings of prophecy, he does not enter further on the question.† An earnest mode of looking at sin and guilt, such as is characteristic of the entire Old Testament, and especially of this present book, does not tolerate the notion of a pantheistic diffusion and absorption of the soul, which rationalistic interpreters find in this passage.‡ Such foolish thoughts can only be cherished by

* Cartwright, "danda igitur opera ut ipse salientem in se et perennem aquam habeat, quæ illum recreet, cum nec hydria, nec rota sibi consulere possit."

† These limits are mistaken by Winzer when he remarks, "si spes, quam nos foremus lætissimam, Ecclesiastæ, adfulsisset, non obiter ipse tetegisset et verbis ambiguis notasset rem maximi momenti."

‡ Hitzig, "That this particle of the divine breath poured out by God into the world and separated to an individual existence, will be drawn back again to its

those who think lightly of sin. Those terrible words in Deuteronomy xxvii. 26, "cursed be he that keepeth not all the words of this law to do them," should effectually prevent them rising within us. The doctrine of the Old Testament is that righteousness and sin stamp an indelible character on the soul. It is impossible that the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, so emphatically insisted on, should at once be reduced to nought in the moment of death. Against such a view is decisive, moreover, the piercing seriousness with which the future judgment is announced everywhere, and especially in this book. On all these grounds, and on the ground, finally, of the emphasis laid on that retributive work of God with whose mention in verse 14 the whole book terminates, the return of the soul to God can only be such an one as that of which the apostle speaks in 2 Corinthians v. 10, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad;" compare Romans xiv. 10, "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ;" and Hebrews ix, 27, "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." After its departure the soul must present itself before Him from whom it had its origin, to receive from him its judgment. The Chaldee paraphrases the Hebrew as follows, "et spiritus animæ redibit, ut stet in judicio coram deo, qui dedit illum tibi." That is the Israelitish view. The other is a Japhetism of Bunsen's. Only on the view adopted by the Church, not on that of the Rationalists, has the passage the significance which is called for by the context. No other meaning than this, "that the soul must one day return to God as its judge," is fitted to prepare the way for the admonition, "remember thy Creator," which is the main feature of this entire section. Remember thy Creator, in order that thou mayest not have to bewail a misspent earthly existence when it is too late for remedy, and then after death come into judgment.* The Berleburger Bible says, "precisely for this

source and so be united once more with God's breath, which is the soul of the world."

* Cartwright says, "illud juvenes cautos et consultos reddat, quod illico ex hac vita migrantes apud judicem suum sistentur, ibi accepturi prout se gesserint."

reason should a man consider well how he lives and acts here, seeing that, do what he will, he cannot avoid appearing before God. Souls come out of eternity into this world as on to a theatre. There they exhibit their persons, their affections, their passions, that which there is of evil and good in them. When they have as it were acted out their parts, they are forced to retire, to lay off the person in which they presented themselves, and to go naked, just as they are, before God for judgment. All men are convinced enough in their conscience that they cannot remain thus in their own nature, and that they cannot escape from, or pass by, God when they die, as the ungodly would fain do, being anxious even for the mountains and hills to cover them, if they can but remain without God. But, willing or unwilling, we shall all infallibly fall into the hands of our Creator. And one may see clearly that the greatest labour and anxiety of dying men arises from their feeling that they are on the way to God. How the whole man trembles and shakes! Especially when he dare not comfort himself with the hope of a reconciled approach! There is no exception to the declaration, that all men must return to God, but still there is a great distinction amongst them. Most men return to God as to their insulted Lord: some, however, as to a gracious and compassionate friend and father. Inasmuch, then, as our coming to God is certain and unavoidable, we should make it our first, as it is our most needed care, to see to it every moment that we be able to come unto God in a right manner." Much importance has been attached to this verse in connection with disputes concerning the origin of the soul. If the soul returns to God, such was the conclusion drawn by the advocates of Creationism, it must owe its origin to God and not to its human parents.* The defenders of Traducianism answer, that the return of the soul to God has relation to the creation of the first man.† This reply, however, can scarcely be regarded as

* Jerome says, "ex quo satis ridendi, qui putant animas cum corporibus seri, et non a deo, sed a corporum parentibus generari. Quum enim caro revertatur in terram et spiritus redeat ad Deum, qui dedit illum; manifestum est, Deum parentem animarum esse, non homines."

† Cartwright, "hoc dico, eos qui ex hoc loco conantur traducem evertere, fundamento parum firmo niti. Nam liquidum est Ecclesiasten ad protoplasti

satisfactory. The return of the individual soul to God is only satisfactorily accounted for on the view of Creationism, that it owes its origin directly to God. As far then as this passage is concerned, Creationism is in the right, although, an examination of the weighty reasons advanced in favour of Traducianism must convince us that it only gives a part of the truth. The right course is to combine and reconcile the two apparently opposed theories.

CHAPTER XII. 8-14.

We have here the Epilogue of the book. At the commencement (ver. 8), and at the close (ver. 13, 14) the sum and substance of the book is set before us in a very condensed and vigorous form. This epitome serves at the same time as a standard and test for the interpretation of the previous portions. In the middle a recommendation is given of the book as containing wisdom offered by God to the Church, and as sharing, along with the other sacred writings, that all-pervading power which proceeds from inspiration (ver. 9, 11); then we find an admonition to the faithful use of those edifying truths and considerations which are set before men in this and the other sacred writings, together with a warning against a too deep study of worldly literature (ver. 12).

Ver. 8. *Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, all is vanity.* Ver. 9. *And there yet remains, that Koheleth was a wise man, he taught also the people wisdom, and gave heed and sought out and set in order many parables.* Ver. 10. *Koheleth sought to find out acceptable words, and uprightness was written, words of truth.* Ver. 11. *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails driven in are those who take part in the collection: they were given by one shepherd.* Ver. 12. *And further, my son, receive instruction from them: of making many books there is no end, and much eagerness is a weariness to the flesh.* Ver. 13. *Let us hear the conclusion of the discourse, the whole matter: fear God and keep his commands; for this (is the duty of) all men.* Ver. 14. *For every work*

formationem respicere, cum Deus animam inspiravit Adamo, sicut ex corporis figmento apparet, quod ex terra exstitisse dicitur."

shall God bring into the judgment on every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Ver. 8. The correspondence between this verse and the commencement of the book (chap. i. 2) shows that it is not to be connected with the preceding section, but is to be set at the head of the conclusion. There is, however, of course a certain connection between it and the close of the preceding section. If our earthly existence comes to the end described in ver. 7 it is vanity, and true good may not be sought in it.* This one sentence does not give us the quintessence of the entire book, for it contains many things which cannot be classed under such a head, and Knobel is quite wrong in saying that "the theme of the whole book is the assertion of the vanity of human life and struggles." What we have here is a single thought of prominent importance, which, as being such, it is the purpose of this concluding repetition to bring to notice. Verses 13 and 14, which are expressly announced as the true summary of the book, form the complement to verse 8. What is said in the latter leads and prepares the way for that which is said in the former. The knowledge of the vanity of earthly things conducts to the fear of God afterwards recommended. Since all things are vain, man, who is subject to vanity, should do all in his power to enter into a living relation to Him who is the true absolute Being, and through fellowship with him to participate, himself, in a true eternal being. All being vanity, man should not further vex himself about a "handful of vanity,"—he should not care much whether he have to suffer a little more or a little less, but attach importance alone to that which either hinders or favours his fellowship with Him who is the true absolute, personal, Being.

Ver. 9. יותר signifies generally "more" (chap. vi. 8, 11, vii. 11), here it means "remaining," as in 1 Samuel xv. 15.

* Jerome—"post descriptionem interitus humani pulchre exordium libri sui repetens, ait, vanitas vanitatum, dixit Ecclesiastes, omnia vanitas. Quum enim cunctus mortalium labor, de quo in toto volumine disputatum est, huc perveniat, ut revertatur pulvis in terram suam, et anima illuc redeat unde sumta est, magnæ vanitatis est, in hoc seculo laborare et nihil profutura conquirere."

Rambach says, "Patet igitur ex hactenus dictis atque imprimis etiam ex vita hominis naturali tam brevi et misera, quod recte ab initio adfirmaverim, omnia quæ soli subjecta sunt, vana, misera et caduca esse."

"There remains," that is, "it remains yet to be said." Luther, who renders, "This same preacher was not only wise, but he also taught," and others, take יותר in the sense of "besides;" compare יותר ממני "besides me," in Esther vi. 6. The title Koheleth did not belong to Solomon as such, but as *Salomo redivivus*, as the ideal author of this book. (Compare what has already been said on this matter in chap. i. 1.) This is evident from this verse alone. Of Solomon himself it was superfluous to say that he was a wise man, and taught the people wisdom. After what had been said about Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kings v. 9-11, such praise would sound rather cold. *A wise man*, of the kingdom of God; not in the sense of the world, not of his own making, but of God's, (compare v. 11): this passage consequently does not contradict Proverbs xxvii. 2, "let another praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips." He was an organ of that heavenly wisdom, of which it is said in the Book of Wisdom vii. 27, *κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας κατασκευάζει.** Koheleth did not limit himself to being wise for himself, but he *further* (עוד) taught the people wisdom. The title Koheleth of itself indicates this practical popular tendency. On the side of the readers there was the corresponding duty, to hear and to take to heart what was taught. The Piel of אזן, which only occurs here, is most simply explained by "listen, hearken," after the example of Aquila, the Syriac and the Chaldee. The comparison of the Hiphil form is less remote than that of the noun מאזנים, "scales," from which several have been disposed to derive the meaning, "to weigh, to consider." To attain to the truth of things we must listen; especially shall we succeed in this pursuit if we possess a hearing ear for God and his revelations: compare Psalm xlix. 5, "I will incline mine ear to the parable." תקי is separated from אזן and חקר by the accentuation and by the want of the copula. The two latter verbs designate the means by which the תקן comes to pass. The verb, which occurs in chap. vii. 13, in the sense of "to make

* Rambach,—"Ex numero scil. illorum sapientium quos Spiritus S. singulariter ad docendum scribendumæque instruxit, coll. v. 12, unde non verendum est, ut aut inutilia ac falsa hactenus monuerit, aut deinceps v. 13, 14 monituras sit."

straight," describes here not merely "the making complete," but at the same time also the skill or ability of the work.—If Koheleth is Solomon only in so far as he is the speaker in this book, then the "many parables," or proverbs, cannot be those mentioned in 1 Kings v. 12, of which a great part is contained in the Book of Proverbs, but must be those contained in the present book, which it is the aim to recommend. The book contains two hundred and twenty-two verses, which may be regarded as so many משלים. There is of course a reference to 1 Kings v. 12: the ideal Solomon follows in the footsteps of the historical.

. *Ver.* 10. *Koheleth strove to find out acceptable words* :— naturally not for the earthly, but for the heavenly minded; words which should go to the hearts of the true members of the Church of God. Schmidt remarks: "Quæ jure meritoque desiderari et placere debent, tanquam divinæ virtutis et certitudinis." Cartwright says, "Verbi Dei encomium celebratur ab adjuncta dulcedine s. delectatione. Sunt etenim homini pio melle dulciora, Psa. xix., ut cibus famelico ut potus sitienti." *And uprightness was written, words of truth.* The relation of the two halves of the verse to each other is wrongly estimated by Elster, who says, "his representation unites therefore artistic grace of form with inner truth of thought." Words are rather acceptable, because they are upright and true, as in Luke ii. 52, χάρις is a consequence of *Wisdom.* ישר, "uprightness," denotes everywhere that character or condition which is adequate to the idea or standard. Wherein this consists is more carefully described by the addition, "words of truth." Truth is the quality which perfectly corresponds to the norm. The adverbal view of ישר (Luther, "and wrote rightly the words of truth") can scarcely be justified. The fundamental passage in this connection is Proverbs viii. 6-10, where wisdom says, "hear, for I speak noble things, and the opening of my lips is uprightness. For my mouth speaketh truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, and there is nothing twisted or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and upright to them that find knowledge." That which is said there in regard to the Proverbs holds good also of this book, inasmuch as it is a

production of the same "wisdom from above," and not of weak, erring natural reason.

Ver. 11. From the praise of his own book, the author passes to the praise of the great whole, of which his work was destined to form a part, to wit, of the canonical books of the Old Testament. *The words of the wise*, of the organs of the ἄνωθεν σοφία, of the authors of the sacred books: to the number thereof the author of this book must be reckoned according to what has preceded.* The Berleburger Bible says, "in ver. 11 the reason is given for that which had been first affirmed: because, namely, he is one of the wise who are driven by the Spirit of God (2 Peter i. 21), whose words, therefore, have a deep meaning and importance." Hitzig observes, "an external connection is established between verses 10 and 11, by the fact that the words of truth in verse 10 proceed from one of the חכמים (ver. 9 a). Hence, *such* words of the wise."† *Are as goads.* דרבון, from דרב in the Arabic "to be pointed," denotes goad in general, and not specially "ox-goad." The point of comparison is only the power of piercing, penetrating deep: Gesenius; "aculeorum instar alte descendunt in pectora hominum iisque manent infixa." We should be led to this view also by the parallel comparison of *Nails.* Knobel says, quite incorrectly, "just as the ox-goad teaches the ox manners, and causes it to go rightly." *And like nails driven in are the participators in the collection.* נטע means strictly "to plant;" it is used in Daniel xi. 45, in the sense "to drive in." The plural משמרות is here treated as a masculine: for remarks on feminines in ת which are changed into masculines, see Ewald, 174 g. The plural מסמרים occurs in Isaiah xli. 7, with which

* Correctly Rambach, "Nam verba sapientium, atque ex illis maxime scriptorum θεοπνεύστων, Mosis, Samuelis, Josuæ, Davidis, ex quibus et Ecclesiastes fuit, coll. v. 9." Incorrectly Elster, who says—"By the words of the wise are meant gnomic or didactic poems, which being brief and precise both as to thought and expression are specially fitted to have such a lively, stimulating effect." According to the parallelism, "the wise" are the authors of the entire canonical books; and that the excellence is not to be sought in the *form*, but in the substance, in the thought, is clear from the fact that their origin is traced to the One Shepherd, or, in other words to Inspiration.

† Schmidt and Rambach, "Ratio hic redditur ejus quod, ver. 10, dictum est scriptam esse ab eo rectitudinem et verba veritatis h. e. firma et infallibilia. *Ratio* nimirum est quia ipse sit ex illis sapientibus, Spiritu Dei actis, quorum verba sint sicut stimuli, etc."

compare 1 Chronicles xxii. 3. The expression בעלי אספות has been most variously explained. It is therefore of the more importance to renounce all attempts at guessing, and to seek a solid groundwork. The form, אספות, does not elsewhere occur, but the masculine form, אספים, does: this latter, therefore, must be our guide, more especially as it is in use amongst the writers of the post-exile period, to whose usage that of Koheleth everywhere bears resemblance. אספים, "that which is collected, collectæ, collectanea," is used in 1 Chronicles xxvi. 15, 17, and Nehemiah xii. 25, of the stores of the sanctuary, in reference to which it is said, in 2 Chronicles xxv. 24, "silver and gold and all the vessels which were found in the house of God."* Now אספות here has quite the same meaning as this אספים:—both signify, "collected things," "that which is collected." The sphere to which what is collected belongs, the nature of that which is collected, is more precisely defined by the foregoing expression, "the words of the wise," to which בעלי אספות corresponds. Accordingly, the reference can only be to the national library: and the Baale or Associates of that which is collected can only be those who have taken part in the contents of the collection, to wit, the authors of the individual books contained therein. בעל is any one who takes part in a matter: thus בעלי ברית are the associates of the covenant, (Genesis xiv. 13); בעלי רשע are those who are participators in wickedness (compare Eccles. vii. 12); בעלי עיר are the associates of a city, that is, the inhabitants: בעלי תלמוד, are the authors of the Talmud. The two clauses correspond exactly to each other: to the "words of the wise," correspond the "associates of the collection," and to the *goads*, the *nails* driven in. Only in the second clause is the position of the words an inverted one, and the object of the inversion is to connect נתנו immediately with בעלי אספות. All explanations different from the one given by us split on the meaning of אספות just established. So for example that by which even Luther rendered the two difficult words—"as nails fastened in are the 'masters of assemblies,'" namely, the

* Lightfoot, opp. i., p. 560, busies himself ex professo with these Asuppim, and under Nehemiah i. c. defines them as "certæ apothecæ, in quas thesauri et oblationes templi colligebantur et recondebantur, et quidem h. l. tales quæ erant ad januas sitæ."

teachers who preside over the assemblies of the people, or that of Gesenius—"the associates of the (learned) assemblies." Apart from the fact that this meaning is unsuitable—teachers or learned men are quite out of place here—אספות does not signify "assemblies." In the opinion of others בעלי אספות is not the subject, but is put in opposition, and describes *nails* more particularly: "qui ipsi clavi sunt domini collectionum, *i. e.*, instrumenta v. media firmiter res combinantia," (Geier). This is thought to suit the expression, "the words of the wise," very well: since they not only enable the wise to collect their distracted minds, but also keep a whole Church together," (Berleb. Bible).* But even on this view a doubtful meaning is thrust on the word אספות; the thought drags, and the impression of the simple image of goads and nails, which was meant only to represent the piercing, deeply penetrating power, is destroyed, or else the *nails* are without reason separated from the goads; and finally the correspondence between the sentences, which requires that בעלי אספות, corresponding as it does to דברי חכמים, must be the *subject*, is overthrown. Hitzig refers the term, "the collected ones," to "collected proverbs or sayings." In that case, however, בעלי is unsuitable; besides, the parallel expression, דברי חכמים, has a wider signification; and further, this book does not at all contain a "collection of sayings." According to the well-founded interpretation advanced above, the sense of the two clauses is the following—that the sacred writings of Israel are endowed with a deeply penetrating power, in distinction from all worldly literature, which can only produce a superficial impression, and is incapable of stirring the deepest depths of the mind and heart. A parallel passage is Revelations i. 16, which represents a sharp and two-edged sword as going out of the mouth of Christ. By this we are to understand in the first instance, not the power which the word has of penetrating to, and healing the heart, but rather the destructive power it derives from the omnipotence which is its source. This is clear even from chap. ii. 12, as compared with chap. ii. 16, where the two-edged sword is said to be directed against

* Following the example of Cocceius, Vitringa says; "habent virtutem ecclesiam continendi in eodem sensu, quemadmodum clavi asseribus firmiter impacti ædium partes apte consertas minime vacillare et hiare sinunt."

the false seed which is in the Church; and from chap. xix. 21, where it is said to bring down ruin on the anti-christian power of the heathen. But the power of the word to destroy, and its power to penetrate the heart with salvation, have one root. That root is the energetic life it draws from God, who is the fount of all life and of all strength. We may say the same thing of the second parallel passage from the New Testament, Hebrews iv. 12: "for the word is living and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." There also, "the living energy of the word from which it is impossible to escape," (Delitzsch), is directed in the first instance against its enemies and despisers, as is evident from the warning reference made to facts of the time of Moses, when disobedience to the word was followed by death. Hand in hand, however, with this aspect of the energy of the word goes the healing and redemptive one specially mentioned in the passage now under notice. A canon whereby to judge sermons has been justly drawn from this verse. They ought to have the characteristics of the Scriptures themselves: they are worth nothing if they cannot stand the comparison with goads and nails.* Here also have we a rule for the conduct of hearers towards sermons:—"they must not feel vexed if they leave their sting in the soul."† The words, "they were given by one shepherd," give the reason why such qualities are ascribed to the "words of the wise," and of the "associates of the collection;"—it is as if the writer said—"and indeed they are such because they were given."‡ Analogous is 2

* Jerome, "Simul et hoc notandum est, quod dicuntur verba sapientium pungere, non palpare nec molli manu attrectare lasciviam sed errantibus et tardis pœnitentiæ dolores et vulnus infigere. Si cujus igitur sermo non pungit, sed oblectationi est audientibus iste non est sermo sapientis. Verba quippe sapientium ut stimuli.—Hoc stimulo, necdum Paulum, sed adhuc Saulum puto in via confossum erroris audisse; durum tibi est adversus stimulum calcitrare."

† Cartwright, "Hoc nos admoneat tranquillo animo Ministrorum asperiores et acriores adhortationis morsus placide ferre, et eosdem ad Deum tanquam autorem, non autem ad ministrorum morositatem (quod fieri solet) referre: denique hinc liquet scripturam et sanam doctrinam non assentari hominibus, aut corruptam naturam nostram blandimentis delinire."

‡ Cartwright, "Omnium antem verbi encomiorum nullum majus est, quodque omnium aliarum laudatissimarum virtutum *fons et causa est*, quod postremo

Timothy iii. 16, πᾶσα γραφὴ, θεόπνευστος, καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἔλεγχον, etc., where the deeply penetrative influence of the Scriptures is traced to their divine inspiration. The subject of נתנו is firstly, "the words of the wise," and then "the associates of the collection:" in regard to the latter, compare Ephesians iv. 11—"and he gave some apostles, etc." (see Stier on the passage). The "Shepherd" can only be the Lord. God is first designated the Shepherd of Israel in Genesis xlviii. 15; xlix. 24: in the last quoted place He is simply called "the Shepherd." Further in Psalm xxiii. 1, where not the individual believer but entire Israel says, "the Lord is my Shepherd:" (see also Isaiah xl. 11; Jeremiah xxxi. 10; Ezekiel xxxiv. 11, 12.) Israel the flock, the Lord the shepherd—this is a common image, especially in the post-exile writings. On any other mode of explanation we lose ourselves in a region of guesses. As a shepherd, as the loving support of his Church, God has given it the Holy Scriptures.* In contrast to the plurality of the writers, which gave occasion to the words, "the associates of the collection," emphasis is laid on the oneness of the primal source of the Sacred Scriptures.

Ver. 12. *And for the rest.* The offer is complete; it now only remains that what has been offered be appropriated. *My son:* "dear reader, whoever thou art, whom I have sought to admonish as a father," (Berleburger Bible.) *Take instruction from them.* מהמה refers to the preceding verse in which the entire scriptures are spoken of. Elster's view consequently is incorrect; "in verse 12 Koheleth advises his readers to be content with the simple truth contained in his own book." His own book is mentioned only as part of a comprehensive whole. נזהר was used in the sense of "to let oneself be admonished" in chap. iv. 13. We find it employed with the same force—"to let oneself be admonished by the Word of God," in Ezekiel iii. 21, xxxiii. 4, 5, 6. In Psalm xix. 12, to which there appears here to be a very distinct allusion, it

loco ponitur: nempe quod omnes Dei sermones, utcunque per varia Prophetarum organa et instrumenta ad nos perveniant, ab uno pastore Christo nobis donati sint."

* Cartwright, "Est enim verbum dei pabulum et veluti tenera herba, qua pascuntur pii ad vitam æternam."

is said of the revealed commands of God, "moreover, by them is thy servant *warned*."* Luther translates, "guard thyself, my son, against others more:" and this explanation was approved by Gesenius. For the understanding of יותר מן appeal may be made to Esther vi. 6; for the meaning of the verb, to the Chaldee. But it is simplest to understand יותר as in verse 9; and the parallel passages are too decidedly in favour of the meaning assigned above to נותר. The meaning, "to guard oneself," does not occur in Hebrew usage. After the exhortation to the right use of the sacred Scriptures, follows a warning against the study of the literature of the world.† *Of making many books there is no end.* It is the nature of the wisdom of this world never to arrive at a conclusion concerning the very highest questions, with which we have alone here to do; never to come to certain results, never to get rest. It is ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth. There is consequently no consolation for him who devotes himself to this literature with the expectation of finding in it the solution to the enigma of this earthly life: *and much desire is a weariness to the flesh.* להג occurs only here. The verb signifies in Arabic "to be desirous." The reference to the thirst for *knowledge* lies not in the word but in the context: "much desire for that multitude of heathen books." It is not in the interest of *laziness* that this warning against "weariness of the flesh" is uttered. One may meditate day and night on the law of God (Psalm i.) without experiencing this "weariness of the flesh." But one should subject oneself to such weariness only when some positive actual result is likely to be gained. In connexion with the literature of heathendom there was weariness of the flesh and nothing else; it was a mere Sisyphus labour; it brought no true gain to the God-descended spirit.‡ Some have maintained that the words, "of making many books, etc.," imply "that at this time the simplicity of the wisdom revealed by God had already begun

* "Unde et pater ejus hanc laudem doctrinæ Dei tribuit Psa. xix. quod Dei servus eadem cautus et commonitus redditur."—Cartwright.

† Jerome—"Exceptis his verbis quæ ab uno pastore sunt data, nihil tibi vindices. Alioqui, quærenti multa, infinitus tibi librorum numerus occurret: qui te pertrahat ad errorem et legentem frustra faciet laborare."

‡ Cartwright—"Quorum ex lectione præter tædium et tui ipsius fatigatimem, nullum fructum percepturus es."

to be spoiled by an unfruitful and prolix school-learning." But that the writer's attack is not directed against the native Hebrew literature, is evident from the fact that for centuries long the dogmatical wisdom of the Rabbins was handed down solely by oral tradition; and it is quite certain that at the date of this book, however late we set its origin, there existed no extended Rabbinical literature. From chap. vii. 26, as well as from the contrast drawn between Israelitish and heathenish wisdom even in the Book of Proverbs, it is evident that the author's polemic is with that false wisdom which was threatening to pass from the heathen world to the Jews. Others, who rightly refer the words to heathen literature, draw from them the conclusion that the book was not composed till the time of the Persian dominion. But it is impossible to prove that the heathen were more addicted to writing many books at the end, than at the middle, of this period. Recent investigations have put beyond doubt that, in earlier times. Egyptian literature was both comprehensive and vain and unfruitful. According to Diodorus, i. 49, over the sacred library at Thebes was the inscription, "pharmacy of the soul," ψυχῆς ἰατρεῖον.

Ver. 13. The saying *here*, corresponds to the commencement of the Epilogue in ver. 8. There, all things earthly are represented as vain: here, our connection with God is set forth as the great essential. "the conclusion of the discourse, the whole, let us hear." The word, סוף is never used by the writers of the pre-exile period, and indeed, as a Hebrew word, never occurs except in this book, in Joel, and in 2 Chron. xx. 16: it frequently occurs in the Chaldee portion of Daniel. Its meaning is not "the sum," but, "the whole." At the same time, only a thought of thorough importance is put at the end when expressly described as the end; and we are afterwards distinctly told that the end is also the sum. דבר is undoubtedly the particular discourse set before us in this book. The article may be omitted, whenever "the context may be presumed to define more precisely what is meant, and when therefore, the article is considered superfluous," (Ewald,) כל being strictly a noun, it should not be rendered, "of the whole discourse:" הכל is rather set in opposition, and informs us that in the termination of the discourse the whole is included;—it

expressly specifies that the closing thought is the main, the fundamental thought. We may also regard the oft-repeated exhortation addressed to murmurers, to enjoy life, as comprehended under the last admonition—"fear God." For what is it but fear of God, willingly to bear what God has laid upon us, to rise above our trials with the exclamation, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," to live in freedom from care and fear to the present moment, and cheerfully to enjoy what He offers. All murmuring is godlessness. נשמע is the pause form of the first plural future; compare Joshua xxiv. 22; Jeremiah xlii. 6. "Fear God and keep his commandments, for that is (the duty of) all men. Many commentators explain, "for that is the whole man." Ewald says,—"for therein consists the whole man, or that, which is truly simple, which is sufficient for the entire man, and in which everything else that is human is comprised." Elster says, "therein lies man's whole nature, thereon depends his whole fate."* However attractive this explanation may be, we must still abide by Luther's translation, "For that belongs to all men." The phrases כל אדם and כל האדם very often occur and invariably signify—"all men;" never, "the whole man."† Against this consideration the harshness of the ellipsis, "that (should) all men," is not at all worthy of mention. Such harsh modes of expression occur not unfrequently in the later form of the language, in which this book is written.‡ To fear God and keep His commandments is the duty of all men,

* The saying of Lactantius forms a good commentary on the words as thus viewed: he says in the Instit. vi. 1, "Id enim est hominis officium in eoque solo summa rerum et omnis beatæ vitæ ratio consistit: quandoquidem propterea ficti et inspirati ab eo sumus, non ut cœlum videremus et solem, quod Anaxagoras putavit; sed ut artificem solis et cœli, Deum pura et integra mente coleremus."

† כל אדם Leviticus xvi. 17; Job xxi. 33; xxxvi. 25; xxxvii. 7: Psalm xxxix. 6, 12; lxiv. 10: Jeremiah x. 14: etc. כל האדם chap. vii. 2; Genesis vii. 21; Exodus ix. 19; Numbers xii. 3, xvi. 29-32; Judges xvi. 17; 1 Kings viii. 38.

‡ Jerome, "aiunt Hebræi, quum inter cætera scripta Salomonis, quæ antiquata sunt nec in memoria duraverunt, et hic liber obliterandus videretur, eo quod vanas assererit Dei creaturas et totum putaret esse pro nihilo, et cibum et potum et delicias transeuntes præferret omnibus, ex hoc uno capitulo meruisse auctoritatem ut in divinorum voluminum numero poneretur, quod totam disputationem suam et omnem catalogum hac quasi ἀνακεφαλαιώσει coarctaverit et dixerit finem sermonum suorum auditu esse promtissimum nec aliquid in se habere difficile, ut scilicet Deum timeamus et ejus præcepta faciamus."

because all bear His image, and can have no true life or growth except in connection with the primal source of their existence: they must also be punished with destruction if they criminally and violently break this connection. This latter consideration is expressly and emphatically alluded to in ver. 14, where the motive of the admonition is given. "Into the judgment on every secret thing." עַל is very frequently used of the substratum or object: hence "on" is equivalent to "concerning, in respect of." That the judgment here is principally the *future one,* is clear from the corresponding ver. 7, where the appearance of the spirit separated from the body before God, in order to receive recompence for its works, was spoken of: (compare 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 10; Acts xvii. 31.) Still there is no reason for confining our thoughts entirely to the future judgment: we should rather think of judgment in its widest compass, as it is begun in time and perfected in eternity. The mere mention of "secret things" does not compel us to limit the words to the future judgment. For in Psalm xc. 8, it said of the judgment which is pronounced and executed by history—"thou settest our iniquities before thee, our *secret sin* in the light of thy countenance." Even Luther saw how comprehensive was the application of the expression: he remarks, "the author does not speak here only of the judgment at the last day, but, according to Scripture usage, of judgment in general. There is a judgment and an hour for everything with God, and no one can escape. Wherefore Arius and all heretics are already judged. But at the last day it will be made still clearer in the presence of all creatures, angels and men, that even now in the day of visitation, God the Lord has laid bare their sin and disgrace, that in a word, there is no more concealment."

"O how exceeding necessary is it that our light and thoughtless nature should at all times remember, and be reminded of, the strict and unavoidable account awaiting us, so that we may never forget it! How easily one or another may be called upon to render his account ere he is ready! Should we not therefore be ever preparing, if we do not desire to be put to confusion, but to receive such a sentence as we desire and can count blessed."

PROLEGOMENA

TO

THE SONG OF SOLOMON,

BY

PROFESSOR DR. HENGSTENBERG.

PROLEGOMENA

TO

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

I. ON THE UNITY OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THERE are various views in regard to the composition of the Song of Solomon. Some writers look upon it as an aggregate or collection of single poems, composed by different authors and at different periods. Others, on the contrary, regard it as "a drama not intended for representation." These latter are at great pains to show that, from the beginning to the end, there is a regular progress, both of the thought and the action.

Neither of these two views expresses the whole truth: the truth lies in the middle. The Song of Solomon is not a collection of poems by different authors; nor is it a collection of unconnected poems by one and the same author: nor, further, is it by any means a thoroughly and regularly progressive whole. The book falls into two parts—the union and the reunion: and, in each of these two parts, we observe, not a "dramatic progress," but a series of groups of stanzas, in which the various aspects of the relation of love are exhibited to us. Analogies to this method may be found in various parts of Holy Scripture (compare my Commentary on the Book of Revelation, vol. ii. 2.) We may apply to the Song of Solomon what de Wette says of the Book of Daniel—"The book has a plan, and forms a whole, but it is so arranged that one and the same thing keeps recurring under different forms,

presenting itself before the eye of the reader with ever increasing distinctness and clearness."

Let us, in the first place, set forth the considerations which bear against the view of the Song of Solomon as an aggregate of poems originally unconnected.

The superscription itself—"The Song of Songs"—characterises the book as a complete and internally connected whole. Even that interpretation of the words, which was invented for the very purpose of setting aside the testimony to the unity of the work furnished by the superscription—the explanation, namely, "The Song which consisteth of many songs,"—tells in the same direction. For, an aggregate utterly destitute of internal unity could never be called *a Song*. But the unity is still more decidedly favoured by the only explanation which can be considered well-founded, to wit, "the most glorious song;" an explanation which is in accordance with Solomon's own usage in 1 Kings viii. 27, where he describes the highest heavens, as "the heaven of heavens." Compare, also, עדי עדיים, "the most glorious ornaments" (literally "the ornament of ornaments,") in Ezekiel xvi. 7, and Numbers iii. 32. This explanation is now universally recognised as the right one. Gesenius for example, says, "the expression, *Song of Songs* is unquestionably so much as, the most beautiful of songs." Ewald also says, "a song which is distinguished amongst songs, in comparison with which all others hide their heads." Magnus remarks, (page 13), "the explanation, *the most beautiful song*, is the only correct one, and is adopted with one accord by all the more recent expositors;" he also allows that the author intended thereby to indicate that he regarded the work as a connected whole. Unless we force a meaning on the word, the singular שיר, can only refer to a single song, that is, to a song which forms a connected whole.

As the superscription, so also does the conclusion, (chap. viii, 13, 14) show, that we have *one* book before us.

The formal arrangement of the book, shows that the "Song of Songs" is not a loose assemblage of separate songs, but an organised and connected whole, and leads us, therefore, to the same conclusion. The ten minor sections of the book are collected into two greater ones of five parts each: the subject of the one of these greater divisions is, the union; of

the other, the reunion. The first part of the first greater division, embraces from chap. i. 2, to chap. ii. 7, and is divided into three stages. The second part consists of the decade in chap. ii. 8-17. The third part is chap. iii. 1-11 a decade, with a concluding verse, divided into two series of five verses each. The fourth part is formed by the number seven in chap. iv. 1-7. The fifth, by the decade in chap. iv. 8—v. 1. Of the second greater section, the first part begins with chap. v. 2, and ends with chap. vi. 3. The second part is the decade chap. vi. 4—vii. 1, which is divided into two series of verses respectively numbering seven and three. The third part is the decade chap. vii. 2-11, divided into two series of five each. The fourth part comprises verses to the number of seven, chap. vii. 12—viii. 4, divided into two series of three and four. The fifth part is the decade, chap. viii. 5-14, divided into two series of verses, respectively of the number of three and seven.

In support of the unity of the book may be further urged the fact that the second part contains a succession of allusions to and interweavings with the first, whose purpose is to indicate that the old relation which had been disturbed by discord is now fully re-established. This procedure reaches its climax in chap. vi. 5-7 as compared with chap. iv. 1-3 : compare besides, chap. v. 9 and vi. 1, with chap. i. 8: chap. vi. 11, with chap. ii. 12, 13 : chap. vii. 4 with chap. iv. 5 : chap. vii. 5 with chap. iv. 4 : chap. vii. 6 with chap. iv. 3 : chap. vii 12, 13, with chap. ii. 12, 13 : chap. viii. 2 with chap. iii. 4: chap. viii. 3, 4 with chap. ii. 6, 7 : chap. viii. 5, with chap. iii. 6.

The frequently recurring concluding formulas are, moreover, so many indications of the unity of the book. So also the thrice repeated charge to the daughters of Jerusalem not to awaken her love (chap. ii. 7, viii. 5, iii. 4.) A similar formula occurs in chap. ii. 17, viii. 14, with which compare chap. iv. 6: then also in chap. ii. 16 and vi. 3.

Even in the very title, Solomon is set before us as the centre of the whole poem. He appears in this character also at the close (chap. viii. 11.) In the course of the book he is mentioned in chap. iii. 7, 9, 11 : compare also chap. i. 4, 12, vii. 5, where he is referred to under the title of "the King."

Throughout the whole work the lover is one and the same, to wit, the heavenly Solomon.

The beloved one also is the same through the entire book, to wit, the daughter of Zion, the Israelitish Nation. In the opening of the theme (see chap. i. 6) she complains against herself, for not having kept her vineyard; and towards the close (chap. viii. 12), she promises faithfully to watch over her vineyard. Neither of these things has any meaning unless we suppose the beloved one to be Israel.

Throughout the whole, mention is made of the daughters of Jerusalem, (see chap. i. 5) that is, of the heathen nations who were to be brought into the kingdom of God.

Throughout the whole, the Church is represented under the image of the Mother of the heavenly Solomon, and of the Bride (chap. iii. 4, 11, vi. 9, viii. 2, 5): the Church appears also as a garden full of lovely trees and flowers (compare chap. v. 12-16, vi. 2, viii. 13, ii. 12, 13, vi. 11): lilies are the symbol of loveliness—especially of the loveliness of the nations who are to be received into the kingdom of the heavenly Solomon (compare chap. ii. 16, iv. 5, vi. 2, ii. 1, 2, v. 13, vii. 3): the breasts are an image of the nutritive virtue of the Church (compare iv. 5): the desert stands for the condition of the lost and unredeemed (compare chap. iii. 6, viii. 5): the dove is used as the symbol of the defenceless innocence of the Church (see chap. i. 15, ii. 14, iv. 1, v. 2, 12, vi. 9.)

Within the narrow limits of the Song of Songs, as frequent mention is made of myrrh as in all the rest of the Old Testament. Appletrees and apples are alluded to in chap. ii. 3, 5, vii. 9, viii. 5: and in all the rest of the Old Testament only twice. Lebanon, with its cedars, seems to have stood constantly before the mind of the poet (see chap. iii. 9, iv. 8, 11, 15, vii. 5, i. 17, viii. 9.) He endeavours, too, throughout, to enumerate as completely as possible in his allegorical picture, the noble products in which Canaan was rich: he shows also a decided preference for local comparisons (see chap. vi. 11.) An examination of the points of agreement and difference between the sections, chap. iii. 1-5 and chap. v. 2-8, also confirms the unity.

The language and style have throughout the same colouring: the author shows a strong preference for foreign elements—

especially for Aramaic elements. He regularly uses שׁ for אשׁר, and with a frequency without parallel in the entire Old Testament, with the exception of the Lamentations of Jeremiah: he uses the word רעיה, "friend," (feminine) of the beloved one; and of this there is no other example: he uses דוד, which signifies properly "love," of the "lover" (compare chap. v. 2, 4, 6, and many other passages; see also the similar use of the word "love" as a designation of the "Beloved One," in chap. ii. 7; iii. 5-10; vii. 7.) This latter usage is found elsewhere only in Isaiah v. 1, and is there probably borrowed from the Song of Songs, to which the entire passage, as well as the particular image of the vineyard, seems to allude.

After all this, one may well be surprised at the shortsightedness and confusion of interpreters, who could ever fail to see the unity of the Song of Songs. The refutation of those who maintain a "dramatic progress" can of course only be effected in the course of a commentary. But the mere fact that no two of the commentators who uphold this view, agree, even in essential points, sufficiently warrants the suspicion that the "dramatic progress" exists not in the book itself, but only in the inventive fancy of its advocates, the traces of whose busy activity any one may discover who will give his attention to the matter. Delitzsch, the most recent representative of this view, thinks that the goal of the whole first part up to chap. v. 1 is the marriage union; and that the poet approaches gradually to this aim by a series of preparatory steps. But, in fact, every individual section of the first part culminates in the marriage union. Beginning with the very first, we see that each section terminates with presenting the love of the two lovers as having attained full satisfaction, and as having arrived at the very pitch of perfection (compare chap. ii. 6, iii. 5.) If we do justice to this plain and evident fact, the notion of a "dramatic progress" disappears, and the "drama not intended for representation" becomes an empty fancy.

II. THE AUTHOR OF THE SONG OF SONGS.

The superscription to the Song of Songs is decisive in favour of the authorship of Solomon. He is expressly mentioned in

it as the author. Suspicion has been thrown on the superscription, because אשר is used in it instead of ש, which elsewhere, throughout the whole book, is invariably employed: but this ground has no real importance. It is at once removed by the simple observation, that ש belongs to poetry, whereas the superscription is written, at all events formally, in prose. Positive arguments for the genuineness of the superscription are—I. Its enigmatical and pregnant character, and that mingling of description of the subject and of the author which is very probable and appropriate as emanating from the sacred poet himself, but not as emanating from a later glossarist. II. The circumstance, that at the beginning of the poem there would be no mention of its subject if the present superscription be pronounced inaccurate.

The evidence in relation to the author, furnished by the superscription, is further confirmed by the marked connection of the historical relations and allusions of the book with the age of Solomon. This is most decided and plain in such passages as chap. iv. 8; vii. 5. Chapter vi. 4, alludes to the time previous to the separation of the two kingdoms. So also chap. iv. 1, where Jerusalem appears as the metropolis of Gilead, as well as of other districts. The same period is suggested by the mode in which comparisons are drawn promiscuously and indifferently from all parts of the monarchy of Solomon and David, which was evidently present to the mind of the poet as a united whole. See for example Jerusalem in chap. iii. 11; vi. 4; the Temple in chap. iv. 6; the tower of David in chap. iv. 4; Engedi in chap. i. 14; Sharon in chap. ii. 1; the valley of the Jordan in chap. ii. 1; Thirzah in chap. vi. 4; Gilead in chap. iv. 1; Heshbon in chap. vii. 5; Carmel in chap. vii. 6; Lebanon and Hermon in chap. iv. 8.

The age of Solomon is further suggested by the whole style and character of the work. Kleuker says, in his work on the Song of Songs (page 18), "the whole feeling, the whole tone of the book, and its manner, which is in part splendid, and in part beautiful and natural, lead us at once to think of the writer as belonging to the most flourishing period of the Hebrew constitution and history." Döpke thinks that "the fresh and vigorous mind of a poet, who lived in free and flourishing times, to whose imagination a full supply of lovely and smil-

ing images presented itself unsought," expresses itself in the Song of Songs.

The cheerful sunshine of the age of Solomon irradiates even those portions which are in themselves obscure and dark: whereas even in the most joyous and exultant songs of a later period, the clouds, through which the light penetrates, are distinctly visible—the countenance radiant with gladness shows traces of the tears which had been shed shortly before.

The entire course of the thought of the poem could only have taken its rise in an age like that of Solomon. Even for such pastime as may be called *sacred* (and such is presented to us in the Song of Songs), there is no desire in times when misery presses heavily on the soul. Men then seek consolation and strength as directly as possible from God. The passage, Jeremiah xxv. 10, "And I take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride," (compare chap. vii. 34; xvi. 9), may be the more appropriately adduced in the present connection, as this book implies that at the time of its composition songs of love even of the lower sort flourished in Israel. The Song of Songs is essentially a transformation of poetry—it is a noble growth of the spirit grafted on the wild stem of worldly love-songs.

The account given of itself by the Song of Songs receives further confirmation from the fact that the mental and other peculiar characteristics of Solomon reappear in it. It breathes the high and lofty spirit attributed to Solomon in 1 Kings v. 9 ff.

The title given to the book is "the Song of Songs":—now we find it reported in the Books of Kings that Solomon was the author of numerous songs, שירים. This account alone shows, with sufficient clearness, that Solomon may not, as some who have but one measure for all minds would have it, be limited to one sphere,—to that, namely, of wise sayings, whose character is not at all that of songs, to which it is essential that they be *sung*. The assumption just alluded to, fails utterly of agreement with all in the historical books, that bears witness to the universality of Solomon's genius. The Song of Songs could only have been written by a man whose experiences in connection with earthly love had been such as Solomon's.

History testifies to Solomon's pleasure in gardens. In Ecclesiastes ii. 4-6, we read, "I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and pleasure-gardens (פרדסים), and planted them with trees of every kind of fruit. I made me pools of water to water therewith the shooting forest of trees." Here we have the natural groundwork of the allegorical description of nature contained in the Song of Songs.* Vineyards are mentioned again in chap. i. 6, 16; ii. 15; vii. 13; viii. 11; and the allusion to the vineyard of heavenly Solomon at Baalhamon is clearly based on an actually existing type. Gardens are mentioned in chap. iv. 12-15; v. 1, 13; vi. 2, 11: pleasure-gardens in chap. iv. 13: fruit-trees in chap. iv. 13, 16; ii. 13; vi. 11: and water-pools in chap. vii. 5, with which compare chap. iv. 12, 15; vi. 11.

But Solomon's feeling for nature did not show itself merely in the pleasure he took in gardens. According to 1 Kings iv. 33, "he discoursed concerning trees, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; and he discoursed on cattle and birds and creeping things and of fishes:" that is, undoubtedly, in the *proverbs* and *songs* previously mentioned. The whole context forbids us to suppose

* This probably still remains even for the physical eye. Ritter says in his *Erdkunde*, Th. 16, 1 S. 280, "The blessing which everywhere in the East the system of irrigation diffuses over the land is seen in peculiar fulness in the *Paradisaic Etham*, the now narrow, but yet lovely, valley of Wadi Urtas. This, in all probability, was the garden of Solomon so rich in pools of water, which is described in the Song of Songs as a pleasure-garden with the noblest fruit trees, and in the legends, as a walled garden planted by Solomon. Josephus, in his description of Solomon's buildings, magnificence and glory, narrates how the king was a lover of horses and chariots (then remarkable objects in Judea), and how he often, early in the morning, at break of day, to refresh himself, drove in a high chariot, surrounded by halberdiers of his life guard in gorgeous attire, with gold powdered hair, to his lovely garden of Etham, distant from Jerusalem about two schœni (see Josephus' Antiquities, viii. 7, 3).—Robinson was cheered to find here that rarity in Palestine, a murmuring brook: Wilson's feeling was that the valleys above and below the Solomonic pools of water must, in consequence of the irrigation of their gardens and fields, have offered a lovely retreat to the citizens of Jerusalem who took pleasure in, and sought, the silence, solitude and beauty of nature. v. Schubert also, visiting this valley in March 1837, found the cherry and apricot trees in full blossom, and heard the turtle doves cooing in the groves. In March 1843 again, Wilson was strongly reminded by the beauty of the opening spring, of the descriptions given in the Song of Songs (chap. ii. 11, 13), and was deeply moved by the evidences of the poet's truth to nature presented by his own native land."

that formal treatises on natural history are referred to; Solomon's wisdom being the only subject touched upon both before and after.* Now this peculiarity exists not only in Proverbs, but equally in the Song of Songs. Repeated mention is made of the cedars of Lebanon; and along with them of cypresses (chap. i. 17), and of palms (chap. vii. 7.) From that height, the figurative contemplation of the world of plants descends to the lilies, and to the thorns amongst which they grow (chap. ii. 2); to the myrrh and the camphire (chap. i. 13, 14); to the mandrakes (chap. vii. 13); and finally to the whole floral and vegetable world (chap. iv. 13, 14). Of the four-footed animals mention is made of horses in chap. i. 9; of sheep and kids in chap. i. 7, 8 (compare iv. 1, 2); of hinds and roes in chap. ii. 7, 9, 17; iii. 5; viii. 14; of foxes in chap. ii. 15; and of lions and leopards in chap. iv. 8. Among birds, besides to doves, allusion is also made to turtle doves (chap. ii. 12), and to the raven (chap. v. 11). There is not a book in the whole of the Scriptures which contains in so brief a space so many allusions to natural objects. The point of most importance, however is that all these references to nature are made in the service of *wisdom*,—that they are so many touches in the allegorical picture of the experiences and course of the Church of God. All nature is as it were turned into spirit. Whoso has made the Song of Songs a part of his very flesh and blood, must look on nature with other eyes. Even the human body is glorified in this poem.

Solomon "built houses," we read in Ecclesiastes ii. 4. The manner in which he carried out his artistic ideas in the erection of great buildings is set forth in detail in 1 Kings vi., vii. His taste for art shows itself in various ways in the Song of Songs. We may adduce, for example, the references made to the carpets of Solomon, (chap. i. 5;) to his chains and laces, (chap. i. 10, 11;) to his houses, whose beams were of cedar and whose floors were of cypress, (chap. i. 17;) to the bridal chariot made of the wood of Lebanon, the pillars whereof were silver, the back gold, and the seat of purple, (chap. iii. 10, 11;) to the rings of gold and torquoises, and the bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, (chap. v. 14;) to the pillars of marble set

* Even Josephus recognised this: see his Arch. viii. 2, 5.

in sockets of gold, (chap. v. 15;) to the ornaments, the work of the hands of the master-workman, (chap. vii. 2;) to the tower of ivory, (chap. vii. 5;) and to the palace of silver (chap. viii. 9.)

That which we have above exhibited in detail was hinted at by Kleuker in the following words—"let any one compare the accounts of Solomon's loves in the historical books, the taste for nature and magnificence displayed in all his thoughts and delineations thereof, and evidenced in his other remains, and it will be difficult to conceive that any other than he wrote the Song of Songs."

The testimony in favour of the authorship of Solomon given by the superscription is further confirmed by the agreement between the Song of Songs and other of Solomon's productions. Foremost mention in this connection is deserved by Psalm lxxii. This Psalm agrees with the Song of Songs, in showing that Solomon occupied his mind earnestly with the Messianic hopes of his nation.

Throughout the whole of the Song of Songs, Messiah is entitled Solomon, and the daughter of Sion Sulamith, (chap. vii. 1;) and her finding of peace, by means of the heavenly Solomon is represented as the very height of happiness and well-being, (chap. viii. 10.) In perfect agreement with this is the special stress laid on the peace to be brought by Messiah, in Psalm lxxii. Nowhere is peace as a characteristic feature of the Messianic period, alluded to with such force and distinctness as in the two Messianic descriptions, headed—"By Solomon," the man of peace, whose peaceful reign foreshadowed Christ's Kingdom of peace.

In Psalm lxxii. we are expressly told that the kingdom of that great king, in contrast to that of his predecessors, will extend over the whole earth, that all kings will fall down before him, and all peoples serve him. This universality of the Kingdom of Christ is emphatically referred to in the Song of Songs. For example, at the very commencement we read, (chap. i. 3,) "therefore do the virgins love thee;"—by the image of the virgins we are to understand the nations, which are to be received into the Kingdom of Christ. In chap. i. 5, as well as in a number of other passages, mention is made of the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, of the heathen nations

who, in the day of redemption, will unite themselves to the Israelitish mother Church. In chap. iii. 9-11, a description is given of the marriage of the heavenly Solomon with a host of lovely virgins. "There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number," we read in chap. vi. 8. This is, in a symbolical form, exactly the same as that which is said more literally in Psalm lxxii., "and he rules from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. And all kings worship him, and all Gentiles serve him."

Particular points of coincidence between the two, are further, the mention of the cedars of Lebanon, (see Psalm lxxii. 16,) and the very emphatic allusions to shooting out and flourishing, (Psalm lxxii. 3, 7, 16.)

Owing to the peculiarity of the purpose Solomon intended the Proverbs to serve, and of the species of literature to which they belong, the points of contact between that book and the Song of Songs, are necessarily fewer than between this latter and Psalm lxxii. Common to both, however, is the preference shown for imagery and enigma, and in a peculiar degree for detailed personification and allegorical descriptions. This is a very marked feature of the Proverbs, whenever the subject under consideration is wisdom and folly. A whole series of separate and highly characteristic resemblances might further be adduced. See especially Proverbs i. 9, compared with chap. iv. 9; Prov. i. 28, compared with chap. v. 6; Prov. v. 15-18, compared with chap. iv. 12; Prov. v. 18, 19, compared with chap. iv. 5; Prov. vi. 30, 31, compared with chap. viii. 7; Prov. ix. 5, compared with chap. vii. 3; Prov. xvi. 24, compared with chap. iv. 11; Prov. xx. 13, compared with chap. v. 2; Prov. xxiii. 31, compared with chap. vii. 10; Prov. xxv. 11, compared with chap. i. 11; Prov. xxv., compared with chap. vii. 2. It is quite clear that these resemblances are not limited to chapters i.-ix., which some writers, carried away by mere presuppositions, wish to separate from Solomon's disconnected sayings, and refer to a later period; but are found throughout the whole of that portion of the Book of Proverbs which the superscriptions attribute to Solomon.

The testimony of the superscription to Solomon as the author is finally confirmed by the reference to the Song of

Songs found in the oldest prophets, specially in Hosea. See also Joel iii. 3; Obadiah ver. 5; and Isaiah v. 1, where we not only find a use of דוד quite peculiar to this book, and representations of higher love under the image of the lower, but also the symbol of the vineyard to describe the Church. A further confirmation, is, that Psalm xlv, which belongs to an early period, presupposes the existence of the Song of Songs, and is evidently a compendium thereof.*

We have the less reason for rejecting the testimony afforded by the superscription, confirmed as it is on all hands, because the character of the Song of Songs would alone naturally lead us to expect it not to be anonymous. As a general rule, which has of course its exceptions, in those spheres where individuality is allowed free play, (which, both in sacred *history*, and in those Psalms which their authors wrote as the interpreters of the sorrows and joys of the whole nation, is less the case than elsewhere,) anonymousness and mediocrity go hand in hand. The less comprehensive the literature, and the narrower the compass of the land, the less frequently should we expect men in Israel to write anonymously.

Kleuker says, (page 19,) "a common author could not by any means here remain concealed. In order to writings being received into the collection of sacred and honoured books, they were required to be produced by authors whose names were revered, admired, and loved. If this were only rightly considered, the period of and after the captivity would not be made to seem so fruitful in the greatest literary works composed by Jews. Many works referred by an evil intention to this period, one might sooner expect to have been rained direct from heaven." Many an objection might of course be urged to the above remarks, but still so much is clear from them, that there is no reason for erasing the celebrated name which stands at the head of the Song of Songs.

The arguments advanced against Solomon's authorship cannot in the least pretend to outweigh those advanced in its favour.

Special stress has been laid on the objection from the language. The main thing in this connection is the frequent

* For additional remarks see the Prolegomenon on the Interpretation of the Song of Songs.

employment of ש for אשר. But that this is rather intentional than the result of the influence of the usage of his age on the author is clear, for the two following reasons: 1. In the superscription which is written in prose we find אשר employed: 2. אשר does not once occur in the whole book. The only satisfactory way to explain this, is to say that the writer intentionally avoided it. In no other instance in which an author was determined to the use of ש by the custom of his time, is it so exclusively employed as in this book.

It is evident, therefore, that ש can in no sense be taken as a guide in the determination of the time of the composition of the Song of Songs. The following is a probable explanation of the usage referred to. As is now universally acknowledged, ש was used for אשר, even before the days of Solomon, though only scatteredly. In his mode of employing the word here, Solomon followed the example of the Phenicians "in quorum reliquiis," as Gesenius observes in his Thesaurus, "omnis ætatis אשר nunquam, ש persæpereperitur." Poetry in general betrays a preference for that which is foreign, rare, and removed from the intercourse of common life.* The universalistic character of Solomon's tendencies, and the comprehensiveness of his mind, must have inclined him strongly to this habit. The introduction of foreign words into sacred poetry stands on the same footing with his employment of Hiram, the artist of Tyre, for his sacred works, (1 Kings vii. 13, 14.) Further, the nature of the subject of the Song of Songs gave special occasion to this usage in two ways. It followed in the train of, and presupposed worldly love-songs; a species of poetry which was undoubtedly cultivated with peculiar zeal by the surrounding heathen nations. It would therefore very readily occur to the author to indicate this connection between his own and preceding compositions, by the style in which he wrote. Besides, the endeavour after universality of style and language, suits admirably the universalistic character of the subject of the poem.

What we have observed in regard to ש, holds good concern-

* This will explain the use of ש in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, as well as its absence both from the Prophecies, and from the more rhetorical, than poetical, Proverbs of Solomon.

ing the other foreign elements which occur in the book, and which either have been or may be adduced, as telling against Solomon's authorship. Of this kind are, for example, רחיטנו and ברותים, in chap. i. 17; עפר in chap. ii. 9, and elsewhere; סתו in chap. ii. 11; סמדר in chap. ii. 13, 15, vii. 13; אפריון in chap. iii. 9; פרדס in chap. iv. 13; רהטים in chap. vii. 6; and, considering the narrow limits, relatively much besides. Two considerations show that the author was not merely influenced by the tendency to Aramaic forms and idioms characteristic of a later period, but acted from intention and free choice. They are these:—I. With the exception of ש scarcely any form is used which reappears in the usage of a later period; on the contrary, the foreign elements are almost entirely peculiar to the Song of Songs. II. The language has a youthful freshness, such as is to be found in none of the productions of the age of the decline of the Jewish nation.

Other grounds against the authorship of Solomon can only be regarded as *argumenta ad hominem*, having force only against those who have wandered away from the true method of interpretation. To defend the authorship of Solomon, whilst at the same time we give up the allegorical interpretation, and see not that the Solomon of the Song of Songs is the heavenly Solomon, is a fruitless task. With perfect justice it is remarked by Döpke (page 25): "Every one who reads chap. iii. 6, 11, and chap. viii. 11, 12, with an unprejudiced mind, must at once see that Solomon could not speak in such a manner respecting himself." This remark is still more applicable to chap. v. 10-16. Taken as self-praise, this passage is utterly incomprehensible, and in vain does Delitzsch attempt to make it comprehensible. But if the Solomon of the poem is the heavenly Solomon, then we may apply the words of Keil, in his continuation of Hävernick's Introduction (page 474): "Unquestionably Solomon had as perfect right to praise in song the love of this king, as he had to magnify his *kingdom of peace* in Psalm lxxii."

III. THE HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE SONG OF SONGS ORIGINATED.

Our task here is, to show that the Song of Songs does not rest on air, is not a mere work of the imagination, but that its contents are connected at many points with the circumstances and *peculiarities* of the time in it which was composed.

As has been already observed, the book falls into two main divisions,—the one, the union; the other, the re-union.

The following are the principal points of the first division, which extends from chap. i. 1—v. 1 :—I. The blessed appearance of Messiah bringing gladness and grace: II. That this Messiah bears the name, Solomon: III. That severe tribulations and woes, which consist especially in the reduction of the people of God to bondage by the powers of the world, and are the deserved reward of their unfaithfulness, will precede the appearance of Messiah (compare chap. i. 5, 6, 7, 8; ii. 8-17), These sufferings are represented under the images of sunburning (chap. i. 6), of winter and rain (chap. ii. 11), of dark nights (chap. iii. 1), and of the desert (chap. iii. 6). According to chap. iii. 1-3, they are aggravated by the efforts of the nation to help itself, and to hasten forward the Messianic redemption by the means in its own hand. IV. That with the appearance of Messiah is connected the reception of the heathen nations into the kingdom of Christ, through the intervention of the ancient covenanted people. Of this last consideration, the hint is given us in the words, "the daughters of Jerusalem."

The subject of the second division is, *firstly*, the sin against the heavenly Solomon, and the judgment with which it is visited, *secondly*, the repentance and re-union brought about with the co-operation of the very daughters to whom Jerusalem herself, the mother, had previously brought salvation,—the complete re-establishment of the old relation of love, having as its consequence the re-occupation of the central position in the kingdom of God by the daughter of Zion, and the inviolableness of the newly formed covenant of love, in contrast to the mutability of the more ancient one.

Now, every point of the first division may be shown to

have a basis in the historical circumstances of the age of Solomon. I. How lively was the expectation of a personal Messiah, even in the days of Solomon, we may learn from the personal Messianic Psalms of David (ii., cx.), from that of Solomon (lxxii.), and in like manner also from that of the Korahites (xlv.), which belongs probably to the time of Solomon. The historical foundation of this expectation was the promise made by Jacob in Genesis xlix. 10: "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and the nations cleave unto him." This saying, combined with the prophetical announcement of the everlasting endurance of the reign of David's line, in 2 Samuel vii., constituted a complete objective basis and support for the subjective poetical representations of the Psalmists. By 2 Samuel vii. the eternity of dominion promised to Judah, in Genesis xlix., was transferred to David. To David's race, therefore, must belong that exalted person, in whom, according to Genesis xlix., the power of Judah was destined to reach its culminating point. II. The *name*, *Solomon*, accords completely with the contents of Psalm lxxii., which sets Messiah before us as the true Prince shadowed forth in the imperfect type of Solomon, and His kingdom as the dominion of righteousness and peace. Light is, for the first time, thrown on the use of this name as a designation of Christ, when we understand how it came to be given to Solomon himself. As we have remarked in another place, "there can be no doubt that David gave his son Solomon this name, because he hoped that his reign of righteousness and peace would prove a type of the reign of Shiloh, even as under Solomon there was the first splendid fulfilment of what Jacob had prophesied respecting the lion-like spirit and power of Judah, respecting his sceptre and lawgiver. Here we have the counterpart to the fact, that the children of Israel, immediately after taking possession of the land, gave to the seat of their sanctuary the name Shiloh.* Both the *name* Solomon and the *facts* of his history remind us of

* In the first passage in which Shiloh occurs as the name of a place, we find the complete phrase, "Thaanath Shilo;" that is, "the future or the advent of the Shiloh." The subjection of the land, the rest which the Lord had given His people from all who were round about them, they considered to be a pledge and a prelude of the obedience of the nations generally, and of the perfect peace to be established on the appearance of the Shiloh.

Shiloh. As to the name, we may remark, that three out of the four letters composing the word Solomon are common to it and Shiloh. The meaning is exactly the same. So also the form. Both in Solomon (strictly *Salomo*) and in Shiloh* the terminal נ is rejected,—a thing which very rarely occurs. In Ewald's Grammar (see § 163) Solomon and Shiloh are set in the closest juxtaposition. As respects the agreement of the facts of his history with the name Shiloh, we may refer to 1 Chron. xxii. 9, where Nathan says to David, "Behold a son is born to thee, who will be *a man of rest*, and I give him *rest* from all his enemies round about, for his name will be Solomon, and peace and quietness will I give to Israel in his days." See also 1 Kings v. 4, where Solomon says to Hiram, "And now hath the Lord my God given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent:" Lastly, compare 1 Kings iv. 24—"He had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphsah even to Gaza, over all the kings on this side the river, and had peace from all his servants round about. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

"But if any doubt whatever should yet remain, in respect

* That Shilo is abbreviated from Shilon, we should judge, not only from the nomen gentile שילני (1 Kings xi. 29), but from the fact, that the ruins of the city which received its name from the Shilo in this passage, are still called "Seilun." Josephus also writes "Selun," as well as "Silo" (See Robinson's Travels: there is, finally, the analogy of the name Solomon, or Salomo. The shortening of *on* into *o* only takes place in proper names, the meaning of whose derivative suffix is a matter of comparative indifference. (See Tuch's just remarks). The only apparent exception is the word אבדה "Hell," in Prov. xxvii. 20: but this is not a real conception, for both there and elsewhere "Hell" is frequently personified (see Apocalypse xx. 13). This case, however, shows clearly that the proper names of Scripture must not be judged as our own are judged, but that a wider sphere is assigned to them. The Samaritan translator rightly retained the word Shiloh. As in this passage we first meet with the person of the Redeemer, so is Shiloh His first name,—a name quite expressive of His nature, corresponding to the names in Isaiah ix. 5, and to the name Immanuel in Isaiah vii. 14. In investigating the meaning of the name we must bear in mind that the termination *on* is used to form *adjectiva* and *abstracta* (see Ewald, § 163). That the form here has an adjectival significance, we should conclude from the analogy of the name Salomo, which is formed on the same model. Like Solomon, Shiloh designates the "man of rest," thus corresponding to the title "Prince of Peace," found in Isaiah ix. 5. Regarding it merely as a nomen proprium, it is equivalent to the German name "Friedrich."

to the typical relation existing between Shlomo (Solomon) and Shilo (Shiloh), it will be set aside by Psalm lxxii. Any fancy that Solomon might possibly prove to be more than a type, that he might himself be the Shiloh, was condemned by that Psalm, as also by David in his Messianic Psalms. In perfect agreement with the words of our Lord, in Matthew xii. 42, "Here is a greater than Solomon," Solomon, in Psalm lxxii., teaches men to look out beyond himself. His own rule of righteousness and peace he regards as a type of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace, who, by his righteousness and love, will gain dominion over the world, whom all kings will reverence, and all the heathen serve. Our attention is directed to the close connection between this psalm and Genesis xlix., even in Ezekiel xxi. 27, where the words, "till he come whose right it is; to him I give it," are borrowed verbatim from these two passages: the words, "right," and "to him I give it," from the latter. Combining both passages, we see that they are intimately connected, and that Psalm lxxii. may be regarded in the light of a commentary." If Solomon, then, derived his name from Christ, it is natural enough that he should transfer his own name again to Christ. III. We should almost inevitably expect severe tribulations to precede the appearance of Christ, especially when it is considered that every great saving step in the earlier history of the people of God has been prepared and ushered in by sore sufferings. We may mention, for example, the troubles in Egypt, the forerunners of the covenant given by Moses; the sufferings in the desert, which prepared the way for their being led into Canaan by Joshua; and the calamities of the period of the Judges, which preceded the glorious age of David and Solomon. This is, however, not saying enough. We can show that David had a clear knowledge of the heavy trials which awaited his race, and which must of necessity precede its final glorification. In 2 Samuel xxiii. David, speaking on behalf of his seed, triumphs over the sore temptations to which it will be exposed in consequence of its future sufferings. David, however, exhibits this knowledge chiefly in his Psalms—specially in that cycle of Psalms, from the cxxxviii. to the cxlv., which give us the results of his meditations on the promise contained in 2 Samuel vii. In this prophetical legacy, which by no accident

is the conclusion of the series of his Psalms, David accompanies his people through their history, and offers them the anchor which shall save them in the storms to which, as he knew through the enlightenment of the Spirit of God from the course of his own life, they would be exposed. All these Psalms rest on the supposition, that the seed of David, with which the destinies of the people of God were inseparably connected, had become degraded and corrupt. In the introduction to Psalm cxlii., in my Commentary, I remark,—"*An admonition of David when he was in the cave.* David regards his own desperate condition when he was in the cave as a type of the future experiences of his own seed, and of the Church. His thoughts in the cave he lays before them as an admonition or instruction. He exhorts them not to despair, but to pour out their complaints before the Lord, even when they are in the very extremity of misfortune:—and to such extremities they will come, for what the fathers endured the sons also must expect to endure,—they also must expect to meet with their Saul." The cycle ends with Psalm cxlv., in which are expressed the praises and thanks which would be offered to God by the house of David and the Church, for His having enabled them to endure the afflictions brought upon them. We may find also, in this cycle of Psalms, a point of connection for what is said in chap. iii. 1-3 respecting the vain attempts of the nation to help itself. On Psalm cxli. I made the following observation:—"David wishes to strengthen his successors on the throne against the severe inner temptations which would accompany the cross that awaited them, which had hardly beset himself during the troubles of the past, and the danger of which he knew from his own experience." Compare especially verse 4, "Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity, and let me not eat of their dainties." "Whosoever has lost his faith, that God will righteously reward wickedness, is very open to the temptation, to endeavour to work out his own redemption by himself, and to employ craft and force instead of keeping within the troublesome limits and restraints of the Divine law." We may further remark that, everywhere in the prophets, there is the idea that Christ will appear at a time when the seed of David and the Jewish nation are in a state of the

deepest humiliation (see my *Christology*). IV. The knowledge that the heathen nations would share in the kingdom of Messiah, is as old as the very hopes themselves of the Messiah's advent. In Abraham's seed were all the nations of the world to be blessed: to Shiloh were the nations to cleave. For remarks on the knowledge of the future reception of the heathen amongst the people of God, and under the sceptre of David, displayed in David's Psalms, see my *Commentary*. Even in the prayer of Solomon, at the consecration of the temple, we find hints of the future concourse of the heathen to the kingdom of God (compare 1 Kings viii. 41-43, 60).

We have thus adduced, in connection with the first division, ample and satisfactory illustrations of the principle laid down. No feature can be pointed out which did not form part of that prophetical picture of Messiah which may be shown to have existed even in the age of Solomon. The case is a somewhat different one with the *second division*. To the thought that a great part of the nation will despise the salvation offered in Christ, and thus fall a prey to the judgment, no completely correspondent parallel can be adduced either from the pre-Salomonic or the post-Salomonic period. Here, however, we may apply some observations which we have elsewhere directed against those who judge the Books of Moses not to be genuine, on the ground of the threats of exile which they contain. "The threats of exile were the necessary fruit of his experience of the corruption of the nation. Moses himself always starts from this basis. That it will manifest itself in a fearful manner in the future, he judges from its outbreaks in the present—a present, too, in many respects, highly favoured. "If they do such things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?" Compare, for example, Deuteronomy ix. 6, 7, "a stiff-necked people art thou. Remember, forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." Then follows an enumeration of particulars. Finally, they are told in ver. 24, "ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." Compare further, Deuteronomy xxxi. 21, "and it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles befall them, this song

will testify against them as a witness, for I know their spirit, which they have even on this day, before I bring them into the land which I sware:" also ver. 26 and 27, "take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. Behold, I know thy rebellion and thy stiff-neck; behold now, while I am still with you, ye rebel against the Lord: and if now, how much more after my death? These words are of the more importance in the present question, as even the prayer at the consecration of the temple (compare 1 Kings viii. 53, 56 and other passages adduced by Keil), to go no further, shows that Solomon lived in, and was very familiar with the writings of Moses. St. Paul says in Romans x. 19, that even Moses in the words of Deuteronomy xxxii. 21, "I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation," proclaimed the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles; and, indeed, to judge from Deuteronomy xxxii. the idea, that all Israel would, as a matter of course, attain to the enjoyment of the Messianic blessedness would be a complete anachronism. The view of human nature in general, and of the nature of Israel in particular, which the nation held from the very beginning, and which was firmly and deeply impressed on the mind by the Mosaic law (for remarks on the deep knowledge of sin evinced in the Psalms, see my *Commentary);* and the experiences forced upon them by the march through the desert, by the times of the Judges and by the governments both of David and of Solomon (in the days of the former took place the rebellion of Absolom against the Lord and against His anointed, and the insurrection of Seba whom all Israel followed; and under the latter the germs were ripening of that apostacy from the dynasty of David which was openly accomplished immediately after Solomon's death; see my Commentary on Psalm lxxviii.) rendered it utterly impossible that enlightened Jews should expect the whole people to render sincere homage and devotion to the Messiah immediately on His appearance. In the Psalms themselves we find a clear separation made in Israel itself—the limitation of blessings to the righteous, and the excommunication of the wicked (compare Psalms l., lxxviii., xcv., xcix., cxxv.) What is said in the

present book is but an application of this general truth to particular circumstances. To find this truth here expressed, ought the less to strike us with surprise, as all the Prophets were in possession of the special knowledge it involved. Isaiah, for example, complains in chap. liii. 1, because the preaching of the servant of God would take so little hold on Israel (comp. John xii. 38, Romans x. 16), and proclaims in ver. 2 and 3, that the appearance of the Saviour in the form of a servant will prove a stumbling block to the covenanted people. In a whole series of passages he announces the judgment which will be executed on the children of the kingdom in the Messianic age (compare, for example, chap. vi. 13, 66.) Zechariah prophesies that the greatest part of the Jews will refuse to believe, will reject and punish Christ (see chap. xi. and xiii. 8); as also that they will finally be restored (see chap. xii. 10 ff. xiii. 9.) In chap. iii. 1—6, 19, 24 of his prophecies, Malachi beholds in vision the judgments with which even the people of God will be visited in the Messianic age.

If we have shown that the existence of a knowledge of the Messianic judgments on Israel at the time of Solomon ought to occasion no surprise, it must appear very natural to find also expectations expressed of the final re-admittance of the nation to the favour of God. Allowing the rejection, the restoration follows as a matter of course. The principle laid down by St. Paul in Romans xi. 2, "God has not cast off His people whom He *foreknew*," and ver. 29, "God doth not repent Him of His gifts and calling," was known in the very first ages of the Church of God. To see this we need only compare the close of Deuteronomy, xxx. 1 ff. The end of each individual catastrophe that comes over the covenanted nation, and, therefore, the final end and result of them all is always, its conversion and forgiveness. We find a compendium of all that the Books of Moses contain of this nature, in Deuteronomy iv. 30, 31, "when thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days, thou returnest to the Lord thy God and hearest His voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them." In 1 Kings viii. 51, also, where the prayer for the forgiveness of the people when they have sinned, is urged on the ground

that "they are thy people and thine inheritance which thou hast brought out of Egypt, out of the iron oven," Solomon evinces an acquaintance with the general truth which gave rise to the proclamation of Israel's restoration after the Messianic rejection.

Only one point now remains for examination, namely, what is said of the efforts put forth by the daughters for the salvation of the daughter of Zion. We have, at all events, one passage in analogy with this, namely, Isaiah lxiv. 20, 21, where, after having been told how the messengers of Israel should, first of all, in the time of redemption, declare the glory of the Lord among the Gentiles, we read, "and they (the converted heathen) shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for Priests and Levites, saith the Lord." The two facts, the fall of Israel and the conversion of the heathen, being assumed, it may be taken, strictly speaking, for granted, that the daughters of Jerusalem will do all in their power to lead back to the fellowship of blessedness the nation from which they themselves received their redemption. The contrary would be unnatural.

We have shown that the beginnings and germs of the contents of the Song of Songs existed in all directions in the age of Solomon, and that the Song of Songs contains, strictly speaking, no new prophetical revelations. Indeed, the whole position of Solomon and the character of the work itself would prevent us expecting this. Still it must not be supposed that the contents of the Song of Songs could have been the result of a putting together of elements found ready to hand, or that they are explicable as a mere product of reflexion, or, finally, that the work stands on the same level as the Book of Proverbs, which was an outflow of the *wisdom* of Solomon. The truths already existing were too much in the form of germs, to account for the certainty and clearness with which they are here connected into a whole. Besides the points of connection afforded by history we must assume the presence of a second element—namely, an elevated state of the soul, a being in the spirit, the breathing of the divine, on the human, spirit. That this was the case with the Song of Songs, as well as with

the Messianic Psalms (see Psalms ii., cx., lxxii), cannot for a moment be doubtful to the spiritual man, who alone is capable of judging of the spiritual. The character of the book itself, testifies too loudly for this. But that Solomon was not a stranger to the prophetic state in its more general sense is proved by history. It records that, in two instances, the Lord specially appeared to him (see 1 Kings iii. 5, ix. 2, compare ix. 9.) Solomon's prayer at the consecration of the Temple, also, was the fruit of an extatic or elevated condition of the soul.

IV. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SONG OF SONGS.

Which of the two methods of interpretation is the true one, the spiritual or the literal, must be mainly determined in the course of a commentary. A fair examination of the form and substance of the poem will show the untenableness of the literal method. We shall now proceed to advance some considerations favourable to the allegorical or spiritual view, which may be urged independently of the commentary.

Even Magnus cannot avoid finding in the name given to the work in the superscription—"The Song of Songs"—a proof that the writer of the superscription, who, as we have shown previously, can be no other than the author of the poem itself, intended the whole to be interpreted allegorically. "For," says he, "had he really regarded his book in the light of an ordinary love-song, the title given to it would have been a thorough lampoon of all the other writings of the Old Testament. What Israelite could ever dare to consider a worldly song as more excellent than the many divine compositions of a Moses, a Miriam, a Deborah, a Hannah, and a David—or even than the God-inspired discourses of the prophets, which may, after all, be styled שירים (?)" A correspondence may be traced between the superscription—"The Song of Songs"—here, and the expression, "thou art the fairest amongst the children of men," in Psalm xlv. 3;—and with the greater right, as the reason assigned in the superscription for the exaltedness of the poem is, that it relates to the most glorious of all subjects, to wit, the heavenly Solomon, (chap. i. 1).

The mention of Solomon as the author, may also be taken

as suggesting the allegorical view. If Solomon be the author, then we are driven at once to the allegorical method of interpretation, for he could not speak of himself in the manner in which he is there spoken of. In case Solomon wrote the book, the Solomon of which it treats must be a different one from the author; must be the heavenly Solomon:—whence also we should at once judge that the beloved one is no other than the daughter of Zion.

In favour of the allegorical interpretation may be urged the relation in which the poem stands to Psalm xlv. If the spiritual is the only correct view of the latter, we cannot avoid letting go the literal view of the former. Psalm xlv. has been termed a compendium of the Song of Songs; and this is perfectly accurate when limited to the first division. Psalm xlv. is a compendious version of the first division of the Song of Songs, made with a view to public performance in the temple. The sons of Korah enter here into a relation of spiritual service to Solomon, similar to that which they had previously held towards David (see Psalms xlii., xliii., lxxxvi.). Common to both is the king who is the "fairest among the children of men" (Psalm xlv. 3), the "chiefest among ten thousand" (Song of Songs v. 10, compare ver. 11, ff). Common to both is the designation, "the king," given to the praised one: see Song of Songs i. 4, 11, and especially chap. vii. 6, where the word מלך is employed as in Psalm xlv. 2, without the article. Common to both is the reference to the plurality of brides, with whom the king unites himself in love at one and the same time, and amongst whom *one* takes a particularly exalted position (see especially chap. i. 3; iii. 6-11; vi. 8, 9). Literally understood, this would be a circumstance peculiar of its kind, for it was never the custom to take more than one wife at the same time. Common to both is the use of lilies as an image of lovely virgins (Psalm xlv. 1). Moreover, there is a similarity between the opening of the Psalm (see ver. 2) and the superscription of this Song. Common to both is the mention of the loveliness of the lips, by way of designating loveliness of discourse (Psalm xlv. 3. Song of Songs v. 13; compare also v. 16; chap. viii. 2; Luke iv. 22). With the description of the heroic might, glory, and majesty of the king, in Psalm xlv. 4-6, compare Song of Songs v. 11, 14, 15. Common to

both is it to designate the kings of the earth the "companions, חבריִם, of the king" (Psalm xlv. 7; Song of Songs i. 7, viii. 13). Common to both is the connecting of מר and אהלות (Psalm xlv. 9; Song of Songs iv. 14). The word אהלות is used only in these two passages. To the "palaces of ivory," in Psalm xlv. 9, corresponds the "tower of ivory," in Song of Songs vii. 5, (compare v. 14). The solemn address to the Bride, in Psalm xlv. 10, "Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house, and cause the king to have pleasure in thy beauty," hints at a possible disturbance of the marriage relation: so far, therefore, there is a coincidence with Song of Songs v. 2, ff. The admonition contained in the first part of the Song of Songs (chap. ii. 15), to catch the foxes, conveys a similar hint. Common to both is, finally, the solemn bridal procession (compare Psalm xlv. 15, 16 with Song of Songs iii. 6-11). After all this, there can be no doubt that the allegorical, and especially the Messianic interpretation of the Song of Songs, and of the 45th Psalm, stand or fall together: that what shows the allegorical explanation of Psalm xlv. to be the only correct one, applies also to the Song of Songs: and that he who accepts the spiritual view in the one case, and rejects it in the other, must fall into serious difficulties. The more consistent and scientific position is that of the Rationalists, who deny the allegorical interpretation in both instances.

In favour of the allegorical explanation we may urge further, that the passages in the Prophets, which contain allusions to the Song of Songs, all rest on the view we are advocating. Compare Hosea xi. 4 with chap. i. 4; Hosea xiv. 6, 8, 9 with chap. ii. 3; Joel iii. 3 with chap. iii. 6; Obadiah 3 with chap. ii. 24; Isaiah xxxiii. 17 with chap. i. 16; Isaiah xxxv. 1 with chap. ii. 1; Jeremiah vi. 2, 3 with chap. i. 7; Jeremiah xxxi. 3 with chap. i. 4; Jeremiah xlix. 16 with chap. ii. 14; Lamentations ii. 13 with chap. i. 9; Lamentations iv. 7 with chap. v. 10; Lamentations iv. 20 with chap. ii. 3; Ezekiel xvi. 61 with chap. i. 5; Ezekiel xxvii. 10, 11 with chap. iv. 4. We may notice also more particularly the following passages:—When Isaiah, in chap. ix. 6, calls the Messiah the Prince of Peace, he alludes to the king Solomon in the Song of Songs iii. 11. The Song of Songs speaks of the peaceful ad-

mittance of the heathen nations into the kingdom of king Solomon: and Isaiah immediately adds, "of the increase of his government and peace there is no end." In Ezekiel xvi. 11 we read, "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a necklace about thy neck." Under the image of ornaments, with which God adorns the newly espoused bride, are set before us the Divine commands: the hands are the instrument of action, the throat is the organ of speech. There is an unmistakable allusion to the allegorically explained passage, Song of Songs, chap. i. 10: "Comely are thy cheeks in the chains, and thy neck in the laces;" that is, "the ordinances and commands as revealed to Israel, and by him brought into practice." In the Song of Songs, תורים alludes to תורה, "law;" and so in Ezekiel, עדי "ornament," alludes to עדות "law." The image of marriage, so frequently employed by the prophets to symbolise the relation between Jehovah and Israel, always presupposes the Song of Songs as interpreted spiritually: but to this point we shall return again.

In favour of the allegorical view of the Song of Songs we may adduce the highest of all authorities, to wit, that of the Lord and his apostles. The New Testament is pervaded by references to the Song of Songs, and all of them are based on the supposition that it is to be interpreted spiritually. Proportionally no book of the Old Testament is so frequently referred to, implicitly or explicitly, in the New Testament, as this one; and we cannot but be surprised at the superficiality or the prejudices of those who have asserted that the Song of Songs is never quoted in the New Testament. The remarks made in my Commentary on the Apocalypse touching this subject are a sufficient refutation of this assertion. The Lord refers to the Song of Songs, with the supposition that it has a spiritual meaning, in Matthew vi. 28-30, as compared with chap. ii. 1. Compare also Matthew xiii. 25, xxiv. 42, with chap. v. 2; Matthew xxi. 33 ff, with chap. viii. 11; Luke xii. 35-37, with chap. v. 3; Luke xiii. 31, 32, with chap. ii. 15; John vi. 44 with chap. i. 4; John vii. 33, 34, with chap. v. 6; John xxi. 16, with chap. i. 8. Further, may be compared with chap. i. 12, Matthew xxvi. 6-13, Mark xiv. 3, John xii 3, Luke vii. 38 with chap. ii. 4, John ii. 1-11; with chap. ii. 8, John iii. 29; with chap. iv. 7, Ephesians v. 27.

In favour of the allegorical interpretation may be adduced the consentient voice of the Jewish Church. That principle of interpretation, which was strictly the national one of the Jewish people, and which was received by all at all periods, may be fairly regarded as proceeding from an uncorrupted tradition, and therefore as the true and correct one. Now this exactly applies to the allegorical method. All the Jewish witnesses who touch on the matter speak in its favour:—not one speaks against it. Several Jewish testimonies expressly affirm that no other mode of interpretation was ever adopted.

Sirach xlvii. 17 has been appealed to in support of the allegorical view, but wrongly. For the words, *ἐν ᾠδαῖς καὶ παροιμίαις καὶ παραβολαῖς καὶ ἐν ἑρμηνείαις ἀπεθαύμασάν σε χῶραι*, are, like all the rest, based on the historical narrative of the books of Kings, and have not, in the first instance, respect to the writings contained in the Canon. This is evident from the mention of *ἑρμηνείαι*, by which we understand merely the *interpretations* of dark sayings, as contrasted with the dark sayings themselves (1 Kings x. 1-3). In the Canon there are no such *ἑρμηνείαι* by Solomon. Verse 15, in which Keil finds a special allusion to the Song of Songs as allegorically interpreted, rests, in the same way, on 1 Kings x., particularly on verse 24.

When Josephus, without further remark, counts the Song of Songs as one of the prophetic writings (for the proof of this see Kleuker), he shows clearly enough that at his time it was allegorically explained. In Apion i. 8 he enumerates altogether twenty-two books, which have rightly found confidence as divine (*τὰ δικαίως Θεῖα πεπιστευμένα*); to wit, the five books of Moses, the writings of the prophets (among which he expressly reckons the historical books), in thirteen books, and besides, four other books, containing hymns to God and precepts for the life of men (*αἱ δὲ λοιπαὶ τέσσαρες ὕμνους εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήκας τοῦ βίου περιέχουσιν*). The last are the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.* For the Song of

* Havercamp's assumption, that Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs were counted as one book, is of course destitute of all foundation. But that there is a vacant place for the Song of Songs among the thirteen prophetical books is equally evident, from the fact that Havercamp is obliged to separate the Lamentations of Jeremiah from his Prophecies, and to reckon them as a separate work.

Songs, consequently, the only place remaining is amongst the prophets. The Targum says expressly that the Song of Songs was composed by Solomon, "the *prophet* and king of Israel, in the spirit of prophecy."

As a witness for the prevalence of the allegorical explanation amongst the Jews, may be adduced the Fourth Book of Ezra, which, according to Lücke, was written before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, (see his Introduction to Apocalypse of John;) and according to Lawrence, between 28 and 25 before Christ. We read in chap. v. 24, "ex omnibus floribus orbis elegisti tibi lilium unum," (compare Song of Songs ii. 1.) Ver. 25. "Ex omnibus ædificatis civitatibus sanctificasti tibimet ipsi Sion. Ver. 26. Et ex omnibus creatis volatilibus nominasti tibi columbam unam," (Song of Songs vii. 8, 9.) Zion is, to the author, the lily, the dove, and the bride of the Song of Songs.

R. Akiba says in the Talmudic Tractate Iadaim, (compare Michaelis præf.,) "absit omni modo ut quis Israelita negaret, quod canticum canticorum non polluat manus, sive non sit sacrum; quia totus mundus tanti non est ac ille dies, quo canticum canticorum Israeli est datum. Omnia enim Hagiographa sacra sunt, sed canticum canticorum est sacratissimum. Et si qua de Salomonis scriptis dissensio fuit, ea tantum de Ecclesiaste fuit."

Ebenezra also says in his preface, (compare again Michaelis,) "absit, absit, ut canticum canticorum de voluptate carnali agat, sed omnia figurate in eo decuntur. Nisi enim maxima ejus dignitas, inter libros scripturæ sacræ relatum non esset: neque ulla de eo est controversia."

The oldest and most weighty testimony to the fact that the allegorical explanation was the one received by the Jewish nation, is that of the admittance of the Song of Songs into the Canon, to which Ebenezra also alludes. It can only be regarded as an anachronism when some writers still hesitate to allow that this could only have taken place in consideration of the allegorical interpretation. In opposition to the prejudices of Semler and his school, it is now universally allowed that not merely religiousness of substance, but a sanctity due to inspiration, was required in order to the admittance of any book into the canon. The excellences which Delitzsch finds

in the Song of Songs as literally interpreted, as for example—"how natural and childlike that she should dance before the daughters of Jerusalem, that she should seek to attract Solomon by the costly native and foreign fruits which she has stored up for him within the door of her house, and that she should sing when queen, the songs which were familiar to her as a shepherdess and vine-dresser," (page 158,) or, "the fine turn, in which, at the close of the last act, she urges on the king the improvement of the condition of her friends and relatives, shows how wisely she could speak and act," (page 159,) or "she is thoroughly and completely a flower-nature," and so forth, form but a very bad foundation for his assertion, (page 177,) that, "the Song of Songs is no less inspired than any one of the Psalms." Such an idea of inspiration is brought to confusion by 2 Timothy iii. 16, where the Apostle, whilst setting forth the true nature of the Old Testament canon, declares also the principles by which its collectors were guided in their work—*πᾶσα γραφὴ, θεόπνευστος, καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἔλεγχον, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.* In the few words of Proverbs xxxi. 30, "to be lovely and beautiful is nothing; a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised," there is more of a moral and religious nature than in the whole Song of Songs literally interpreted, in regard to which Delitzsch, (page 158,) makes the monstrous confession, that "the specifically Israelitish element falls, with Sulamith, entirely into the back-ground in relation to the general human element." The idea of marriage, Delitzsch maintains, is the idea of the Songs of Songs;*—in plain contradiction to chap. vi. 8, "there are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number," as well as to the history of Solomon. Delitzsch professes himself unable to reconcile the Song of Songs, as Messianically interpreted, with Solomon's individuality and manner: but it is certainly far more difficult, to show psychologically how Solomon came to undertake, *ex professo*, the development of the idea of marriage. But, in any case, such an idea of marriage as is here

* This view is not a new one. It was set forth by Jacobi in the last century, at a tolerably suspicious time, at a time when the Church was ready to capitulate and to compromise matters with its enemies. Its genesis has been well exhibited by Kleuker.

expounded, could never be considered canonical. It would want even the general foundation of the fear of God. On the literal view there is not a single reference to religion in the whole of the Song of Songs. The description of corporeal attractions, extending even to parts which are scarcely touched upon even in worldly literature, is offensively predominant in the Song of Songs as explained literally. "Of the blessing of children," as Delitzsch himself says, (page 184,) "there is no express mention." "Sulamith is not even described as the wife, and mistress of the house," (page 184.) The whole is an accumulation of trifles, partly graceful, partly tasteless. We should shift the boundary line separating worldly from sacred literature were we to pronounce the Song of Songs, literally interpreted, worthy of a place in the canon. More recent commentators confess that the admission of Psalm xlv. into the collection of Psalms, and into the canon, can only be explained on the supposition that, at that time, the allegorical interpretation was accepted by the nation at large, (compare my Introduction to the Psalms:) and the same may be said with respect to this book.

Finally, the history of the interpretation of the Scriptures presents a result decidedly unfavourable to the literal view. The older defenders thereof were all men of doubtful name:— for example, Theodore of Mopsuest, Castellio, Grotius, Simon Episcopius. But whenever the Church has been in a flourishing condition, and has had a clear and decided consciousness of its position and duty, it has rejected this principle with horror. Kleuker who, as it were against his own will, and influenced by the opinions of his age, was a defender of the literal view, says himself, (page 132.): "Some examples of æsthetic explanations of this book may be adduced from history. They have been however always regarded as *smuggled goods*." He remarks further, (page 133,) "The first examples of this kind amongst Christians are referred to by Theodoret. He argues very zealously against a whole class of such interpreters, and styles them earthly, carnal minded men, and so forth. No names are mentioned besides that of Theodore of Mopsuest." The gentle and somewhat pietistic J. H. Michaelis speaks, in his *præf.*, (§. 5,) of the "impia opinio," "the impious view of those who reduce this song of

divine and holy love, to a profane and fleshly idyll." Proper honour was first done to the literal interpretation during the age of rationalism, when the Church was degraded to the lowest point, and utterly lacked both sound ecclesiastical judgment and holy taste and tact. He who first brought it into vogue was J. D. Michaelis, one of the chief representatives of the worldly mindedness of Esau.

In view of such weighty reasons against the literal principle of interpretation, only the most striking and forcible considerations should move us to its adoption; especially as all that has been advanced against the spiritual view, turns out, on a more careful examination, to be empty appearance and cloud.

One argument on which special stress has been laid, is the following: "The allegorical representation of Israel under the image of a virgin was not sufficiently common in the age of Solomon. With the exception of the one passage of the Psalms (ix. 15) this image is but seldom used by the prophets till after Amos v. 2," (Delitzsch, 64). "Only subsequent to the time of Isaiah, did the personification of Israel, Judah, Zion, Jerusalem, as בת or בחולת, become popular and stereotyped." (Delitzsch, 20.) "Neither directly nor as a figure of speech do we find it said in the Pentateuch that Jehovah is Israel's husband or bridegroom." It cannot of course be denied that the Pentateuchal phrase זנה אחרי contains as it were the germ of the more developed expressions subsequently employed: "yet it is quite certain that in the Mosaic period, the view of Jehovah's relation to Israel as that of marriage, was still quite undeveloped. Even passages of a symbolical cast, such as Isaiah lxi. 10 (compare Jeremiah ii. 32), and lxii. 5, (compare Zephaniah iii. 17), in which Jehovah's loving pleasure in Israel is represented under the image of the festal joy taken in each other by a bridegroom and bride, cannot be found in the writings of the period before the later kings."

In reply to this we would remark, that the germs of the representation of the higher love—that is, of the relation between God or Christ and the people of the Old and New Testament—under the image of the lower are more important than is here allowed.

It is scarcely conceivable that these symbolical representa-

tions should not have been customary in Israel from the earliest times. That which led to their employment is very carefully enjoined in the books of Moses—for example, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength," (see Deuteronomy vi. 5, compared with chap. x. 12). With this injunction compare Genesis ii. 24, where marriage is set forth as the closest of all relations of love.

In respect to the passages, Exodus xxxiv. 15, 16; Leviticus xx. 5, 6; xvii. 7; and Numbers xiv. 33, where idolatry, and in general apostacy from God, are characterized as whoredom, compare my *Beiträge* 2, S. 49.

But of still greater importance are the passages which Delitzsch has entirely overlooked—Deuteronomy xxxii. 16, "they provoke him to jealousy through strange (gods)," and ver. 21, "they provoked me to wrath by that which was no God, and I will move them to jealousy by that which is not a people," (compare Proverbs vi. 34, 35). Even Vitringa remarks on this passage—"Est autem metaphora hic manifeste desumta a marito, qui cum ab uxore sua illicitis amoribus indulgente se spretum videat, et inde ægritudine affectus, ut vicissim ipsi agre faciat, et ad zelotypiam commoveat, non simulate sed aperte amorem et affectum suum ad aliam transfert, ignobiliorem etiam mulierem, eamque uxore sua spreta, ut videtur, in torum assumit."

After these passages it will be impossible not to find a reference to the marriage relation between Jehovah and Israel in the words of the command, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," (Exodus xx. 5). Michaelis remarks thereon, "consortis impatiens ut maritus corrivalis," (compare Numbers v. 14).

When Benjamin is called in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 12, ידיד, "the beloved of the Lord," we are reminded by the word itself of the intimateness of God's love, which is as the love of a bridegroom and bride. Solomon himself was called Jedidjah (see 2 Samuel xii. 25, "and he called his name Jedidjah because of the Lord.") Compare the words of verse 24, "and the Lord loved him." The name was first employed in a manner suited to the image, when it was conferred on Jedidah the mother of Josiah.

It cannot, however, be called in question that there is a difference in regard to the use of these symbolical representations between the pre-Solomonic and the post-Solomonic periods; and that in the latter they occur more frequently and in a more distinct shape. A comparison of the passages in the Pentateuch with such passages as Hosea i-iii., Isaiah i. 21; l. 1; liv. 5; lxi. 10, 62; iv. 5; Jeremiah ii. 2, 32; iii. 1; xxxi. 22, "the woman shall compass the man," (that is Israel will compass the Lord; see my Christology;) Jeremiah xxxi. 33, "but I marry her to myself" (compare my Christology, "he marries apostate Israel afresh, and in such a manner that the bond of love will henceforth be firm and indissoluble;") and with Ezekiel xvi. and xxiii. will make this quite plain.

But what does the fact prove? It is an erroneous idea that things of this nature arise by regular degrees, by an orderly succession of stages. Certain germs and preparations will of course exist, but the proper naturalization of an idea amongst a people is effected by some one individual mind, on which it has laid a powerful hold. It would be an easy matter to trace this throughout the whole Scriptures. But we will only refer to the example of Isaiah liii, where the image of the servant of God, suffering on behalf of others, is set before us in distinct outline; which, from that time forth, became an inalienable possession of the Church of God. A wise criticism will conclude from the fact that, previous to the Song of Songs, such symbolical representations were rare and very undeveloped, whilst afterwards they occur frequently and in detail, that I. The Song of Songs must have been written by Solomon; and II. It can never have been otherwise than allegorically interpreted. It is a further confirmation of this result, that, in agreement with the chainlike connection existing between the different parts of Holy Scripture, those literary productions which most frequently and fully employ these symbolical representations are nearest in point of time to the age of the Song of Songs: nearest, that is, of those in which such representations are found at all. We may refer especially to Psalm xlv, which in all probability originated in the Solomonic period. In that Psalm, Israel appears as the spouse of the Messiah, the heathen nations as her companions, the city of Tyre as the daughter of Tyre. Hosea also is remarkable in

this respect. His employment of the image and symbol of marriage to represent the relation between the Lord and Israel extends through the whole of the first three chapters ; and it is constantly recurring even in the remaining chapters. To this we may add that the Prophet presupposes the people to be prepared to understand such representations—a presupposition scarcely to be accounted for if there only existed the hints contained in the Mosaic law. Finally the references otherwise made by Hosea to the Song of Songs, as allegorically interpreted, are unmistakable. So also do Isaiah (see chap. v. 1 and elsewhere), Jeremiah and Ezekiel unquestionably allude to the Song of Songs. It is a remarkable fact that precisely those prophets who employ these symbolical representations most frequently can be shown, on other grounds, to have studied the Song of Songs most deeply.

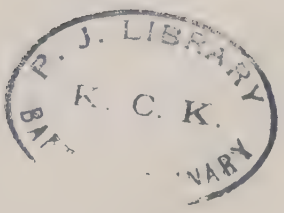
We conclude with the remark, that the spiritual interpretation of the Song of Songs has suffered not less severely from its friends than from its opponents. Apart from the individual attacks, through which the allegorical view has been brought into disfavour, there have been two main errors prevalent. On the one hand, most of the Jewish expositors have been of opinion that the Song of Songs is a poetical history of the leadings of Israel from the days of Abraham onwards. This has been one unfortunate result of their opposition to Christ and His Church. On the other hand, Christian writers have fallen into a wrong estimate of the specially Jewish contents, through that heathen-Christian pride which St. Paul so earnestly fights against, and gentle hints and warnings concerning which may be found even in the poem itself. The duty of the Church is thoroughly to renounce such prejudices, to deprive that literal view which has robbed the treasure of Holy Scripture of one of its noblest jewels, of every excuse, and to act so that such a view may henceforth always bear plainly a character of arbitrariness and bias.

THE BOOK OF JOB:

A LECTURE,

BY

PROFESSOR DR. E. W. HENGSTENBERG.



THE BOOK OF JOB.

THE very first verse of the Book of Job informs us as to the nature of its subject:—"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. The same was simple and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil." The name Job (or more correctly Hiob) signifies *the much persecuted.* Understanding the name of the man, we are no longer astonished afterwards to find him surrounded and assailed on all sides by enemies, with Satan at their head, whose very designation, signifying *the adversary,* stands to that of Job in the relation of an *active* to a *passive. The much persecuted* is described as a thoroughly just man. Four several terms, designative of righteousness, are employed, in order to indicate its great breadth and completeness. According to the clue thus given, we should judge the theme of the book to be *the sufferings of the righteous,*—how they are to be explained, and shown consistent with the divine righteousness; what should be the conduct of men so situated, and by what means the heart is then to be quieted and consoled.

The importance of this theme, and the great significance of the book, whose mission it is, as part of the marvellous organism of the canon of sacred Scriptures, to thoroughly discuss it, must be evident to all. If what Paul Gerhardt says is true,—"Until the grave, the rod of the cross will lie on us; but then it ends,"—it is of the utmost practical consequence to have a clear understanding of this subject. But, that it is no light matter to attain to this clear understanding, that the cross is a deep, unfathomable mystery, that it belongs to the sphere of "great secrets, which the Spirit of God alone can

unfold," is shown by the futility of all the efforts put forth by the natural reason,—a futility which is patent to all the world. Let us more carefully examine some of the views of this question which owe their origin to the unaided mind of man.

The most noted amongst the worldly answers to the question—"How are we to regard the sufferings of such as are really or supposedly righteous?" is that of the Stoics. They maintained that there is in reality no suffering: that pain is a something indifferent, but not an evil. Suffering is merely such in appearance. All depends on our seeing this, on our boldly rising above such appearances, in the consciousness of the dignity of mind, on which external happiness confers nothing, and from which nothing is taken by external suffering. Against this theory the first objection is its untruth. Here the words of Job are applicable—"Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh brass?" Pain, suffering, is not of the nature assigned to it by this theory. It is not true that we can easily and readily rise above it. Imaginary sufferings may be dissipated by such consolation; even as imaginary sins, that is, such sins as do not lie on the heart of the sinner, may be got rid of by that pantheistic doctrine which teaches that sin is a mere appearance, from which we are made free so soon as we see distinctly that we have not to do with a reality; but assuredly neither real suffering, nor real sin, can be so lightly removed. Many who held this notion have been brought by painful experience to confess its vanity. It is condemned by its own supporters. Lipsius, the celebrated profane Philologian of the 16th century, "an extremely active instrument of Satan in the uprooting of Christianity," as Denois styles him, was in his good days thoroughly persuaded of the truth of this stoical view. But when, during the painful sickness which put an end to his life, one of his friends said to him—"It cannot be necessary for me to offer you consolation, for the philosophy which you have advocated with so much zeal must be able to comfort you sufficiently," Lipsius sighed and replied, "Lord, give me Christian patience." Frederic the Great, who recognised no other means of consolation than a "moderate stoicism," gives expression, in a multitude of passages, with

the openness characteristic of a great mind, to his feeling of its insufficiency. He says, for example, in his letters to d'Alembert, "It is a disagreeable fact that all who suffer are forced to flatly contradict Zeno: there is not one of them all who would not confess that *pain is a great evil.*"* Further, "It is a noble thing to rise above the unpleasant accidents to which we are exposed, and the only means by which the unfortunate can console themselves is stoicism, not carried too far. But when gout, or stone, or the bull of a Phalaris enter into our sufferings, the piercing screams which escape from the sufferers, show that pain is a very essential evil."† Lastly, "The stoic, it is true, does say, 'thou must feel no pain,' but *I feel it against my will;* it consumes, it lacerates me, and an inward feeling, overmastering my powers, tears from me wailings and fruitless sighs."‡ What the great and strong soul of this king failed to find in such a means of consolation, others will assuredly be still more certain to seek in vain. But the stoical consolation is not only insufficient, it is also dangerous and destructive; and even should it answer its end, it would be condemned by that word of Christ's—"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and do damage to his own soul?" Thou strikest them, but they feel it not, says Jeremiah, complainingly. Not to feel the strokes of God appears to him to be a heavy charge. The Saviour counts those blessed who are poor in spirit, who are not merely externally poor and wretched, but who also *feel* themselves to be poor and wretched. He saith, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Even in the Old Testament, "the wretched," those who take their sufferings to heart, are constantly represented as the sole heirs of the possessions of heaven. Not to be wretched is equivalent to having no share in the kingdom of God. "I am poor and wretched." So speaks David, no less when sitting on the throne than when hunted by Saul like a partridge on the mountains. This pervading mood of the believer, this condition of the peaceable fruits of the righteousness which the cross is to work out, is *set aside* by stoicism. It does all it can to prevent suffering from touching the inner man. It

* Part XII. of his Posthumous Writings, p. 9. † Ditto, p. 12. ‡ Ditto, p. 16.

thus defeats the counsels of God, and gives no room whatever for that mild and gentle sorrow which goes hand in hand with true repentance. Besides, on this view, one can only rise above suffering by cherishing as warmly as possible the fancy of one's own height, dignity, and excellence. Finally, a stoic is compelled to crush the tenderest and noblest feelings, to sunder the holiest bonds of love; for example, when his nearest friends and connexions die, to gratify his pride, he must deny his love.

Another worldly means of consolation is the assertion, that there are external evils which befall the righteous and wicked without distinction, and that it is irrational to be unwilling to submit to discomforts which are inseparable from the nature of finite limited beings. The intention is thus to put God out of the reach of attack, but the defence is worse than the assault itself,—the remedy is worse than the disease. Whoso cherishes such views is on the high road to atheism. It shuts out from the superintendence of earthly things Him who counts all the hairs on our head, and without whose will not a sparrow falls to the ground; it denies the great truths confessed by David in the psalm—"Lord, thou hast searched me and known me." When we begin to limit God, we are not far from losing him entirely. Every such limitation destroys our fundamental view of the nature of God.

Nor may we even entrust ourselves to those who, in respect of the sufferings of the righteous and the prosperity of the ungodly, would have us look solely to the compensation and balance to be expected in the life to come. The vision of future glory must, of course, be highly consolatory, and the Scripture itself suggests to us this source of comfort. It teaches us that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us—that our afflictions, which are light and momentary, shall work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory; it counts the man blessed who endures the fight of afflictions, because, after he has been proved, he shall receive the crown of life. But this means of consolation alone does not suffice. Rather, in order to be efficient, it needs a solid foundation. This is evident from the fact, that clear light in regard to eternal life, was only given

to the Church of God by slow degrees. It is thus intimated to us, that the present life also has an independent position and meaning; that our first duty is to perceive and understand *in it*, the traces of divine Providence. And if we look into the lives of believers who have had the strongest and clearest convictions as to the doctrine of eternal life, we shall find that the conflict caused by suffering repeats itself ever afresh, that *its* successful termination constitutes really the basis of a living faith in retribution after death, and that where the issue of such conflicts is unfavourable, there also that faith becomes of necessity weak and vacillating. Only when we see in the course of history a continuous judgment of the world, can our faith in *the final judgment* be well-founded and rational. Letters promising happiness in eternity are worthless, if their issuer gives no proof of his power and his good will in the present life. If God is the holy and the righteous One, He must be willing to manifest this His nature in His conduct towards His people and towards His enemies, even in the present world. If he is the Almighty, nothing can prevent Him from this display even in this life. Can we discern no signs whatever of such a course, then our faith in retribution after death will be in a very poor case. If sin is not here already the ruin of men, then there exists no hell: if salvation and safety do not accompany righteousness already here, then there exists no heaven. The future life is not the scene of the beginning, but only of the complete accomplishment, of things. Woe to the man who hopes for an absolute future, in every respect, and in this also! He deceives himself. Who can say whether the God who now shuts Himself up inactively in heaven, will then attain to a better will and to greater power? Unrighteousness even *in time* is at variance with the nature of a holy and righteous God. A God who has anything to make good again, is no God at all. The Holy Scripture knows nothing of a God who only rises to power when this life has ended. Its God is from beginning to end a living God. God's righteous retribution on earth is the theme of praise throughout the entire Old Testament—and that of so lively and convincing a sort, that the Church in all ages has been driven to find therein the enlivenment of its own faith. Our Lord Himself, when describing the reward of

those who have renounced everything for His sake, begins with *this present* life.

Not unfrequently also has resignation been recommended as an antidote to the temptations which arise out of the sufferings of the righteous. Man cannot fathom God's counsels, and, therefore, it is said, he does best to submit himself blindly and without murmurings to all that happens. This counsel, however, notwithstanding its pious looks, comes forth not from the sanctuary, but from the world. Rationalism set it afloat. It wantonly broke the key to the door of the mystery, and then declared that no solution was possible to mortals. Of such resignation the Scriptures know nothing. The sacred writers, who occupy themselves with this subject, are all of them able to justify God on account of the sufferings of the righteous, and never dream of evading the difficulty by the appeal to resignation—a conduct which would be inconsistent with the reality of revelation and of divine inspiration. The fact that one whole book of the Scriptures is taken up with the discussion of the sufferings of the righteous, shows that they are far from requiring a blind faith, which is much more closely allied to unbelief than might at first sight appear.

What shall be said then to grounds of consolation such as, that pain is a condition of joy, that the enjoyment of pleasure becomes keener through suffering, or, that it is necessary for the furtherance of the general wellbeing, that single individuals should suffer for a time? Such contrivances of "vain physicians" and "miserable comforters" do not deserve a moment's attention.

In this matter, therefore, the wisdom of this world proves itself invariably to be folly. The Holy Scriptures on the contrary show themselves in this region also to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Even in their earliest portions they lay the foundation for the solution of this important problem, in that they report the fact of the fall, concerning which the wisdom of the heathen world was in perfect ignorance. "By the fall of Adam the nature and character of man has been quite corrupted:"—and this is the key both to the sufferings of the righteous and to many other secrets. It is of great importance to have possession of this key: for the distribution of the lots of men is determined by the fact of

the fall. Whoso falls into mistakes regarding it must also fall into erroneous views of God. What fearful conflicts arise when severe sufferings befall a man who lacks the knowledge of sin is strikingly and affectingly illustrated in the life of Charles of Hohenstaufen, who committed suicide because he could not understand, and thought himself undeserving of, the troubles with which he was visited. And very many who do not go so far as that, fall through suffering into a state of continuous rebellion against God:—they cherish wrong thoughts about the only Comforter in all tribulation, and drag on a weary and wretched existence. Byron calls God, "the Almighty tyrant whom he wished to look boldly in the face, and inform that His evil is not good." What he was bold enough to utter is a thought which lies like a gnawing worm in the hearts of innumerable men, only unexpressed.

The solution of the problem in Holy Scripture depends on a twofold truth. I. We must necessarily enter through much tribulation into the kingdom of God. For even in the righteous, that is, in him the main tendency of whose soul is Godward, and who keeps the divine law in his heart, there still dwells sin, and the necessary result of sin is suffering. This suffering is inflicted by the divine righteousness as punishment, by the divine love, as a means of improvement. The common result of the two, this combination of *punishment*, which always proceeds from the principle of retribution, and of *love* whose design it is to further our salvation, is *chastisement*, to which the Holy Scriptures earnestly and lovingly admonish us to submit willingly, as being the unavoidable condition of our final redemption and glory. "My son," says Solomon, "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, and be not impatient when He punisheth thee. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and He hath pleasure in him, as a father in his son." These words the Epistle to the Hebrews follows literally up, adding, "if ye endure chastisement then are ye the children of God: for where is the son whom the father chasteneth not? but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Quite in the sense of the Scriptures Luther says in that Table-talk of his which contains so many deep and beautiful things, "therefore is it a foolish thing for reason and philosophy to say, 'it shall go well

with the pious and righteous.' That is no true Christian conclusion. Because sin still remains in the flesh they must needs be chastised and plagued in order that it may be from day to day thoroughly swept out." In the same tone says one of Luther's most unfair opponents, De Maistre, in his "Soirèes de St. Petersbourg," "I confess to them without shame that I can never reflect on this fearful subject without being tempted to cast myself on the earth, as a criminal begging for mercy; or else to call down all possible evils on my head as a slight recompence for the immeasurable guilt which I have contracted towards the Eternal Righteousness. And notwithstanding, they cannot believe how many times in my life it has been said to me that I am a very upright man." II. The righteous are never visited with the cross, that is, with disguised grace, *alone*. The manifest grace of God is always in its company, and in its train. Although in the deepest outward trouble, they are still happier than the ungodly. "Thou givest me joy in my heart," said David, when compelled to flee before Absalom and when stripped of everything, "although, those have much wine and corn." (Psalm iv. 8.) And during the same hard times the Sons of Korah sang, as it were out of his own soul, "the Lord sendeth His goodness by day, and by night I sing to Him and pray to the God of my life," *to be able* and to be permitted to do which, is a great mercy (Psalm xlii. 9.) But when sufferings have accomplished their purpose they are turned away by the Lord. The end always shows the difference between the righteous and the wicked. The proclamations which, according to 1 Peter i. 2, were made by the prophets, "of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow," rested on the known experiences of the righteous. He who walks uprightly in the ways of the Lord, must have experienced that whenever he has stood on the brink of the abyss, the delivering hand has been stretched forth from above to preserve him from ruin, that his rescue has been effected just when he had gone so far that there was "only a step, nay, only a hair, between his life and death."

Now this solution, everywhere hinted at in Holy Scripture, when the problem is brought forward, is fully set forth in the Book of Job. It was a great mistake, when some, in order to do honour to the Scriptures, deemed themselves compelled

to ascribe a purely historical character to this book, which occupies a middle position between the two classes of sacred poesy, the Psalms and Proverbs, on the one hand, and the Song of Solomon on the other. Luther, with his usual good sense, recognised in it a poetical element. He says, in his Table-talk, "I hold the book for a genuine history; but that everything happened and was done as there represented, I do not believe. I hold that some pious and learned man or other put it into the form in which we now have it, and that it was written at the time of Solomon." But it is impossible to rest contented even with this view. How greatly the didactic purpose predominates over everything else is evident from the fact, that even the *name* Job is formed under its influence. The round and sacred numbers, too, play a part such as they would scarcely be found to play in a real history. Job had, for example, before his afflictions, seven sons and three daughters, altogether ten children; and exactly the same number does he receive again afterwards,—so throughout. The negotiations, furthermore, between God and Satan, imperatively require us to distinguish between the idea and its clothing,—a thing which can only be done when the form of representation is allowed to be a poetical one. If viewed as historical fact, the speaking of God out of the storm would be a thoroughly isolated case. There is not, in the entire Old Testament, one miracle having a simply personal reference; besides that, Job was outside the limits of the Church of God, which is the natural soil of all the miracles of Holy Scripture. The Church is invariably the scene of miracles. Of still more thorough importance is the consideration, that such a person as Job could not have existed in the heathen world. If we regard him as an actual historical personage, we shift the boundary line separating the heathen world from the Church of God, and pronounce the redemptive means set up by God superfluous. For depth of religious knowledge, Job stands higher than Abraham. If heathendom could produce such characters,—if it could penetrate so deeply into the wisdom of God, no other revelation was needed. We have no right to appeal here to the example of Melchizedek. For, apart from the fact that he has been justly described as the setting sun of the primeval revelation, there is in Job more than the

pure monotheism of Melchizedek, there is a fulness and depth of divine knowledge, such as is never found except in the sphere of revelation, such as flows forth alone from the sanctuary of the Lord, and such as is peculiar to the Church, as the only salt on the face of this saltless earth. But there is no difficulty in discerning the reason why the author should lay the scene of his work in a foreign country, if we regard it as free and poetical. It is the same reason as that which induced him to go back, beyond Moses, into the patriarchal age, and to avoid the names of Jehovah, which were peculiarly dear to Israel. He does not wish the matter to be decided from the law of God. He sets aside for the moment "what is written." He leaves the region which is ruled by the law, because it is his vocation, independently and by direct revelation, to furnish a solution of the problem, which shall accord with the hints already given in the law. The historical truth of the book lies in an utterly different region from that in which it is usually sought. The author must himself have been a Job, a crossbearer; he must himself have wrestled with despair; he must himself have been comforted with the comfort which he gives to others; he must himself have repented in sackcloth and ashes. For only through his own personal experience could a man write concerning a mystery of God, as the author of the Book of Job writes. This higher ideal view of the truth of the narrative is quite sufficient to account for the quotations made by Ezekiel (chap. xiv. 14-20), and by James (chap. v. 11).

The book opens with a description of Job's life and character before the catastrophe, taking the two points which alone were of importance for his purpose, to wit, his prosperity and his righteousness based in piety. At the close of the opening part he describes Job's tenderness of conscience, which would not allow him to leave unatoned even apparently slight offences, sinful thoughts, light discourse, useless words, such as men are used to utter in the merriment of social intercourse, and fits and ebullitions of worldly-mindedness. Job himself does not take part in the feasts of his children: he keeps himself in holy stillness and in priestly retirement. But when the feasts have gone their round, he comes forth, purifying and atoning, into the midst of his children, not seeking to force

upon them his own views, but yet taking care that they shall not lose sight of the higher relations of life. Now he who stands thus in the midst of his family as a priest, ought, as it seems, and as Job himself thought, to be sheltered from all the strokes of fate. But it happened otherwise; and that it did so, is to be explained from the fact that God's view of human nature is different from men's, that He discerns faults even in His saints. "Life often remains clinging to a straw, refusing to give itself up entirely to death." The praise given by the Holy Spirit to Job—"the same man was simple and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil,"—must of course have full truth. But when any one has attained to this degree, when he can say with truth, "I desire to have nought to do with the world; with that money, honour, pleasure, on which so much industry is spent," sin easily takes another shape; a man is threatened with the danger of being puffed up because of his righteousness, of being no longer willing to rank as a poor sinner, of becoming, in short, a proud saint. Then it becomes necessary for God to use His rod afresh, and to strike right sharply. For this disease is very hard to overcome. Lesser visitations serve often only to make it worse. Spiritual pride finds nourishment in becoming master of such attacks, in showing that they are unable to shake its faithfulness towards God.

The scene is then transferred to heaven. On the occasion of a solemn assembly of the angels before the throne of God, Satan also presents himself, raises doubts regarding Job's virtue, and demands that God shall prove him by suffering. God gives him power over Job, with the limitation that he is not to do him bodily harm.

Satan's desire and endeavour to destroy him shows that Job was a man of honest intent, that he belonged not to those who say, "Lord, Lord," but to those who sincerely strive to do the will of their heavenly Father. God's giving him up to Satan shows that there was still something in him to punish and to improve; that he still needed heavy blows, if he should escape the dangers by which his spiritual life was threatened.

From the necessity under which Satan is here represented as lying, to appear, like the angels, before God's throne, and

to beg a formal permission, ere he brings suffering on Job, we may draw the consolatory truth that he is in his hatred entirely dependent on God, who pledges and proves His compassion and grace to His own children. Satan's intentions in laying upon them the cross are evil, it is true, but against his will he is forced to accomplish God's designs, which always at last remain victorious. The cross brings on a crisis in Job's history, whose final result is, to purge him from the dross of self-righteousness and pride. And this was that root of sin which still kept its seat in his inmost being. Every man has such a root of sin within him, and none dare say of Satan, what the only begotten Son of God said of him—"He hath nothing in me." Even the most intimate disciples of the Lord, even the holy Apostles, were compelled to submit to Satan's request, that he might have them, to sift them like wheat, and to be satisfied if only their faith did not fail them.

Bengel says, "Satan is often concealed as an enemy where we should never dream it." In the Scriptures, the punishments of the wicked are directly traced back to the Lord and His angels, or to Christ. Against the world, which is his friend, Satan seeks no ground of complaint. In the chastisements, however, with which the righteous are threatened, Satan takes part. The Father in heaven turns, as it were, his face away, and leaves to him the infliction of the pain which his children need. Presupposing Satan to be absolutely dependent on God, there is something consolatory in the thought, that he is placed in the matter of the cross between us and God. The sufferings with which we are visited have, not unfrequently, what may be almost described as a malicious character. It must also be so, because it is intended that each one be assailed in his most sensitive part, which frequently none knows save God, the afflicted man himself, and that hateful Satan, who has a very keen eye for the darker side of human nature. Still, it is a good thing that we cannot trace our troubles directly back to God, that our heavenly Father only permits, and that Satan devises and executes. The question put by a savage, "Why then does not God strike Satan dead?" could only have been retailed as apparently ingenious by men who stood spiritually

on a level with the savages. Satan is a very important element in the divine economy. God needs him, and He therefore keeps him until He shall have no more use for him. Then will he be banished to his own place. The Scriptures call the wicked heathen tyrant Nebuchadnezzar a servant of God. They might give Satan the same name.

Job loses everything he has; first his property, then his children. But he stands firm and immovable in the midst of these visitations. "The Lord," says he, "gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." The Lord had not taken away from him anything that was strictly his own; for he had originally nothing, and had no right to lay claim to anything. God did but require back that which He had lent of pure grace. Let it fall, then, as painfully on Job as it might, how could he complain? Instead of murmuring because of what he had lost, he should give thanks for what he had received. But one thing is still lacking. Job had not advanced far enough to recognize in his sufferings the righteous punishment of his sins, and the chastisement necessary for his salvation. That was his Achilles-heel. And this it is which he must now be made to learn, and which, at the end of the book, we find that he has learned, after hard and severe conflicts and sad defeats. The final result is, that he is transformed from a dignified righteous man, into a poor sinner. Then, all at once, everything is made plain—he sees the meaning of his fate, and is therein to be counted far happier than the man who takes his flight into the other world with the sad words on his lips—"Then shall I clearly see and know, that which was hard and dark below."

Even after Satan's second attack, which was directed against his bodily health, Job did not become aware of his defect. The weakness of his wife, who up to that point seems to have held out and to have submitted patiently, even to the loss of all her children, must have served to set Job's strength in a clearer light. "Dost thou still retain thy piety," says she to him, "bless God and die." Death is inevitable and close at hand: God's grace is irrecoverably lost. Have God, then, at all events, blessed, and die and perish in a moment. Thou hadst long ago done more wisely to bid God farewell! The poor woman has been severely handled by commentators

on account of these words. Spanheim calls her a second Xantippe, and maintains that she was left to Job as a thorn in his flesh after his recovery. J. D. Michaelis thinks she alone remained to Job in order that the measure of his sufferings might be full. It must, however, be taken into consideration, that her despair was rooted in the heartiest and tenderest love to her husband. In all their previous losses she had allowed herself to be kept in restraint by Job's own submissiveness. And had the pains of disease befallen herself, she would probably still have resisted her despair. Job, however, does not suffer himself to be dragged down by his wife; he finds means, on the contrary, of raising her up. "Thou speakest as the foolish women speak," says he to her; he does not say, "Thou art a foolish woman," but "thou art becoming unlike thyself, thou art entering into a circle to which thou hast hitherto remained a stranger." "Do we receive the good from God, and shall we not also accept the evil?" It is the same Giver who offers both; and He well deserves that we should take everything from Him without question. As during the first stage of his sufferings, so also during the second, it is expressly remarked that Job "in all this sinned not with his lips." We expect now that something will soon occur to break Job's stedfastness, and to lead him to sin with his tongue. We do not, however, at once see what this can be, inasmuch as he has already lost everything without his submissiveness to God's will being shaken. The sequel tells.

Three friends of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, hear of his misfortune and come to console him. They find him in a most mournful position, set themselves by his side in ashes, and remain seven days long, sitting speechless. After that Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

How is it to be explained, that so great a change comes suddenly over Job; that he who just before was still all submission, and could even rush to the help of his wife, the weaker vessel, now all at once breaks out with the words—"Let the day perish when I was born!" and so forth? To curse one's existence, is to dispute with God, who gave it,—is thanklessly to forget in the pain that blessing which, though often deeply concealed, never utterly fails,—is, unbelievingly, to

despair of the happy issue of our sufferings, and, consequently, of God's grace and righteousness.

The solution of the problem lies here. Where, in our English version, it is simply said,—"And Job opened his mouth," we read in the original text,—"And Job *answered* and said." His friends had not uttered a syllable; but they had clearly enough spoken to him by their looks. Job read in their countenances that their thoughts were busy with his righteousness; that they wished to deliver him a lecture of reproof; that they only waited the opportunity to enter on their work of advocacy of God. He read beforehand in their soul all that they afterwards uttered. That their stillness is not to be ascribed to the depth of their sympathy, is clear even from the words which give the reason of it,—"for they saw that the pain was very great,"—not "for their pain was very great." They could not straightway administer consolation to Job. According to their view, their prime duty was to bring him to a consciousness of his heavy guilt. They waited to catch him in a mood favourable for such a reproving lecture. Hence they held their tongues, until Job, irritated to the utmost by their long silence, himself began the conversation, and forced them to come forward with their view.

Job was now assailed on his weak side. To all other modes of suffering he had been equal, but that it should be adduced in proof of his guilt—that he should be robbed of his righteousness, that last possession to which he had so convulsively clung, and concerning which he himself exclaims,—"My righteousness do I retain, and do not let go; not one of my days does my heart despise,"—was too much for him. Because God, who had sent the sufferings, on whose evidence the charge was brought against him, was also the cause of this last and heaviest loss, he vents his indignation straightway against Him. His friends he regards only as interpreters of the text composed by God.

The charge brought by Job against God gives rise to a dispute between him and his friends, which is carried on with ever increasing passionateness. This dispute is divided into three cycles. The first two fall into three subdivisions, comprising the discourses uttered by the three friends, and Job's separate answers. The last consists of two subdivisions only,

the third friend, Zophar, having nothing more to say. Through his silence the author intimates to us the defeat of all three friends, who had made common cause.

The view taken by the friends is the following:—that sin and suffering are measured out by God, as it were, ounce for ounce—so much sin, so much suffering. One man is just so much better than another, as he is happier. He who is as unfortunate as Job, must assuredly be, not merely a sinner, but a criminal. To doubt this is to do dishonour to God. And even if, in the case of a man suffering severely, like Job, we do not actually know of any great crime, we must still assume that he has committed one, in order to save God's honour. Nor may we allow ourselves to be deceived, even though appearances be of the fairest kind. These only show that the pretended saint is a thoroughly skilled hypocrite.

This view is characteristic of a *superficial piety*. Open ungodliness shuts out God entirely from earthly matters, and ascribes suffering to chance. The entire dispute is carried on in the book of Job from the point of view of the fear of God. But because this view is that of a *superficial* piety, it is, for that very reason, popular. In Elihu's discourse (chap. xxxii. 19), it is expressly described as that of the "many:"—"Not the many are wise," says Elihu in reply. In the sphere of religion that saying, "Vox populi, vox Dei," does not hold good. There, on the contrary, that which is popular is usually the superficial, the shallow. That this view is the popular one, the author intimates, in giving it no less than three representatives. The fundamental error of the three friends is a coarse external conception of sin, which leads them to conclude, from Job's sufferings, that he has committed some palpable transgression. They are only acquainted with individual sins: of the essence of sin they have no knowledge. For this reason sufferings appear reasonable to them, only when they are meted out, piece by piece, to individual offences. They have only an eye for such commands as, "Thou shalt not steal," "thou shalt not commit adultery," which they do not consider in their roots, as did our Lord in the sermon on the mount, after the example of the prophets, and even of Moses himself: they only looked at the outward appearance. From that command, on the contrary, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength," they turn away their eyes, or else give themselves up to the strangest delusions regarding it. Hence are they perfectly satisfied with their own fulfilment of the law, and find it perfectly orderly and just that things should go well with them. And when severe sufferings befal their neighbour, they look down upon him with lofty eyes, and search everywhere until they have discovered either the fact or the possibility of heavy guilt. The troubles of their neighbours seem in some way to do them good. They are the seal to their own excellence. Had Job's friends known human nature or themselves aright, they would have cried out when they beheld his sufferings,—" If this is done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" "God be merciful to us sinners!" A characteristic of the friends is their want of pitiful love. With unrelenting consequence they apply their theological prejudices to the case of their poor friend sitting in ashes, and smitten by the hand of God. They make no effort to enter into his position and feelings: they talk at him without intermission. He only can exercise compassion who has himself received compassion, and to this belongs a recognition of our own sins. All Pelagianism—or if the biblical name be preferred—all Pharisaism, where it is not a question of phrases, alms, and other such external matters, is at the bottom unmerciful, uncompassionate. Had the friends had any true pitiful love, they would have corrected their view by means of the very case before them. Perhaps the reason why the author gives such a vivid representation of this widespread view is, that he himself had formerly entertained it, and had skilfully applied it to poor sufferers whom he had encountered. The three friends, Job and Elihu, may be regarded as representing three different stages in the ways of the Lord, all which the author himself, without doubt, had passed through. First, he had stood proudly by the side of other sufferers; then he himself had wrestled with despair in suffering, because he was unwilling to renounce his self-righteousness; till at last he fought his way with Elihu to full and clear knowledge.

With all this there is no denying that there is an important element of truth in the discourses of the friends, and that usually they only err in the application of the general principle

to the case in hand. This application the author lets them make silently, and hence their discourses, judged merely by their sound, express, for the most part, only truth. This high truth is *the knowledge of the close connection between sin and suffering*, of which a presentiment runs through the whole of the ancient world, and is ineffaceably impressed on the human heart. In solving the problem, the task is, to reconcile the element of truth, which lay on the side of the friends, with that which was on Job's side when he maintained his righteousness against those who charged him with coarse transgressions, and at the same time to trace back both errors to that common source out of which they plainly flow, namely, the want of a deeper knowledge of sin. The author recognised that there was truth in the discourses of the friends, as is plain, both from the free and full play which he allows them, and from the favourable light in which, on the whole, they are placed. So decided is this, that sayings have been adduced by the Church in all ages from these discourses, as if they were fair representations of divine truth:—for example, even the Apostle Paul does so in 1 Corinthians iii. 19, alluding to what Eliphaz advances in chap. v. 13.

In the *discourses of Job against the friends*, a distinction must be drawn between that which flows from his own fundamental view, and that which belongs to the sphere concerning which he himself remarks—"to the wind are the words of him who is in despair." Further, "my sufferings are heavier than the sand on the sea-shore, therefore are my words irrational," (chap. vi. 3.) In the warmth of his feelings, Job frequently goes so far as to represent God as the fierce enemy and persecutor of all the righteous on earth, as almighty arbitrariness and unrighteousness, and expresses accordingly, utter despair of a favourable turn in his affairs, and the conviction that God will never rest till He has brought him to complete ruin. It is a holy stroke of art on the part of the Holy Ghost, from whom the Scripture has its origin, that He allows free and distinct expression to all the thoughts of the pious, even to those which are due to the saddest weakness of the flesh, and then shows how they are to be overcome. Even a Byron was unable to outdo this book; it leaves him far behind. Then, again, when in a calmer mood, Job confesses

that God's righteousness may usually be seen in the government of the world, and only represents his own sufferings as an incomprehensible exception. Here and there, too, he rises to a joyful hope—most gloriously when the confession burst from him, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (chap. xix.) as though the sun of faith had suddenly shone with full clearness through the clouds of pain and rebellion, only, however, alas! to be soon again darkened.

Job at last forces his friends to silence. Their case shipwrecks on their incapability of bringing proof of the crimes which they are compelled to lay to Job's charge, and on the fact that they are not only struggling against appearances, but, as they afterwards find out, against their own conscience also. It is owing to the character borne by Job's discourses previously mentioned, namely, to the interweaving of passion and conviction in them, that he is not allowed to quit the arena as soon as the friends give up the conflict. Before retiring, he lays before us, in the closing discourse, (chap. xxvii—xxxi) a complete, calm and dispassionate statement of his views. Here we get the standard by which to try all his earlier discourses. Job declares, that he still keeps to the assertion of his own innocence, but that he notwithstanding recognises how, usually, punishment follows on guilt; retracting whatever he had previously advanced in seeming conflict with this proposition. Did he not do this; did he on the contrary declare war in general against the eternally true proposition, that *sin is the ruin of men*, the lively carrying out and illustration of which gives the discourses of his friends so high a value—and in the heat of passion he had frequently done so before—then would Job be inferior to his friends, and there would seem to be no foundation for that final judgment of God's, whereby the very contrary was affirmed. Peculiar are the arguments by which Job supports the proposition in the 28th chapter, a chapter which has often been misunderstood, and quoted in favour of that incomprehensibility of the course of divine providence the urging of which gave Rationalism a great show of piety. In the course of a brilliant picture, Job proves that wisdom is not one of the possessions attainable by men in their own strength, but one of the glorious privileges of God. From this he draws

the conclusion, that it can only become ours in a moral and religious way, that is, through our entering into union with God and becoming participators of His spirit. If this be true, the ungodly are excluded from it; and are by consequence given over to unavoidable ruin. For whoso lacks wisdom must rush blindly on destruction. The sea of this world hides so many rocks that a vessel whose rudder is not in the hand of wisdom must of necessity soon suffer shipwreck.

Notwithstanding Job's repeated efforts, the problem still remains to perplex him, the mystery of his sufferings still remains unexplained; a further examination is therefore absolutely necessary. He himself puts this clearly before us in the second part of his concluding discourse, in that he gives a detailed description of his uprightness and of his guiltless conduct, and sets in strong contrast therewith his severe afflictions. Examining the matter superficially, one can see no possibility of a satisfactory solution of the riddle, and may easily fall into the notion, that there is nothing for it but to refer all to the incomprehensibility of God's ways;—a course which conducts to Atheism. If, however, we search more deeply, an outlet presents itself. Notwithstanding the apparent completeness of Job's enumeration of the sins he had avoided, notwithstanding the loftiness of his moral point of view, which led him to regard the confidence placed in gold as not less an execrable sin than idolatry, commonly so called—which made him consider it as a great sin to exult, whether in the greatness of our own possessions or in the misfortunes which befal our enemies; notwithstanding that Job unmistakeably considers sin as an inward thing, treating not merely the sinful act but also the first hidden germ thereof, namely, sinful desire (chap. xxxi. 1), as worthy of condemnation and curse, still, he passes over one main class of sins in silence, evidently because his eyes had not yet been opened to see them. It is God's method to reveal to us by degrees the depths of our corruption; were He to do it all at once we should be liable to fall into despair. These sins were those of haughtiness, self-righteousness, pride in his own virtue. We expect that the impending decision of the dispute will turn on this point. And the fresh and complete exposition of the difficulties with which Job's concluding speech is occupied make us exceedingly

eager to learn the nature of the decision. In distinction from the earlier ones it is marked by the calmness of its tone. Passion's storm is hushed, now that the friends who stirred it up, are forced to silence. A quiet sadness takes the place of the defiance, of the excited murmurs against God, of the questioning of His right, and of the challenges which were previously observable. We see throughout that Job is now in the mood to accept joyfully the solution which may be offered to him ; for by himself he cannot find it, nor indeed can poor miserable man attain to anything unless it be given him from heaven. Everywhere there presses itself on our notice a presentiment that we are on the threshold of an explanation. We feel the soft breath of that grace which prepares the soul for the instruction to be communicated through Elihu. At the close of chap. xxxi. it is said, "the words of Job have an end." The intimation is thus given us, that an entirely new section commences. Job was able to act a dignified part towards the friends, and having at last reduced them to complete dumbness, he now remained alone on the scene of conflict, and the words quoted are intended to mark the boundary line between him, on the one side, and Elihu, God's servant, and God Himself, on the other side. The latter he finds to be indisputably his superiors. Job's time for speaking now ceases: the time to keep silence has begun. Henceforward he never opens his lips, save to express his readiness to keep silence and to lay his hand on his mouth. The three words (for there are no more in the original text) are rich in meaning. All words spoken against God, come, after a brief season, to an end, either of *grace*, as in Job's case, who begs that the folly of his discourses may be forgiven, or of *wrath*, when the mouth that uttereth great things is closed with violence.

Elihu now quits the circle of hearers within which he had quietly kept himself up to this point. Why he is described as a youth, may be learnt from the words which the author puts in his mouth :—"I thought, let days speak, and let the multitude of years prove wisdom. But the Spirit is in man, (on that all depends !) and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Not the many are wise : neither do the aged understand judgment." Majorities are without weight in the Church, and in spiritual things age does not at

all carry the weight which belongs to it in the affairs of common life. *One* inexperienced youth *with* the Spirit of God is wiser than loud multitudes and grey heads, and even than the Coryphæi of wisdom without it. Besides, a youth is the most fitting representative of a truth which is here introduced with freshness and vigour into the midst of the Church of God.

Elihu's entrance is introduced as follows :—"And the three men ceased to answer Job, for he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was enkindled the wrath of Elihu; against Job was his wrath kindled, because he declared his own soul to be more just than God. And against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they found no answer, and therefore condemned Job." The situation is thus set distinctly before us. Job's fault is represented to be, that he was righteous in his own eyes. This necessarily and invariably leads those who are visited with severe afflictions, to the sad point of declaring themselves to be more righteous than God :—which is to turn everything upside down. Self-righteousness deems itself to have fulfilled all its obligations to God. And because it can see in the sufferings, which are in reality inflicted because of sinfulness, and are capable of justification on that ground, only unrighteous arbitrariness, it sets forth God as less righteous than man, and so inverts the natural relation of the Creator to the creature. Access to the source of all consolation is thus cut off, and the way of the return of salvation barred. This is a very dangerous side of Pelagianism. In this respect most men live only on mercy. If God did not spare them, but visited them as He visited Job, they would fall into a state of formal rebellion against God, and would openly declare themselves His "personal enemies;" or else, which is the lowest stage of all, the stage when man renounces his true humanity, they would deny His existence. The friends could not heal Job's disease, because they themselves had a too superficial knowledge of human sinfulness. Not knowing how to meet Job's presumption in the right way, they reproach him with heavy individual crimes. To convince Job of the condemnableness of his self-righteousness, against which the friends had broken their power, is plainly the task which Elihu has now to accomplish.

Elihu agrees with the friends in recognising that all suffer-

ing is a punishment: but diverges from them in that he shows suffering to have another aspect. There is a suffering which has its origin not merely in the divine righteousness, but at the same time also in the principle of love, and which therefore may, nay more, must be inflicted on the righteous, in order that he may see and be purified from the sin still cleaving to him, and be fitted for the higher blessings of redemption. In opposition to the bare idea of punishment, Elihu sets that of chastisement:—an idea which modern times find, alas! difficult of understanding. They speak only of trial, and of that mostly without any distinct conception of its nature.

As this portion is the very heart and life of the book, we shall quote the principal passages literally.

"For," says Elihu, "God speaketh once, yea twice, if man giveth not heed thereto. In the dream of the nightly vision, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumber on the bed. Then openeth he the ear of men, and sealeth their admonition. That he may withdraw man from his doings, and hide *pride* from the man. He preserveth his soul from the pit, and his life from falling under the sword."

Even he that standeth must take heed lest he fall. Especially in pride has the righteous still ever a dangerous enemy. God's compassionate love, therefore, sends from time to time emphatic *inward monitors*, as by significant dreams, which are here mentioned solely by way of example.

But the matter is not allowed to rest there. Inward monitions are but the prelude to *visitations*, and are meant to prepare the soil for these latter. He who walks uprightly in the ways of the Lord, will have found by experience that a heavy cross seldom falls on one who is unprepared for it, that the time chosen is usually one in which the heart has been peculiarly drawn upwards; but also, that it seldom fails to come when such a strong and gracious drawing has been felt. Elihu says further, "he is chastened also with pain on his bed, and the conflict in his bones is unceasing. And he loathes all manner of food, and his soul despiseth dainty dishes." And so forth, is a severe disease described, one being specified out of the whole number of painful visitations by way of example, just as the dream is made to represent inward monitions.

But that the ruin of the righteous is not intended, that in

the infliction of suffering love goes hand in hand with righteousness, is made plain by the *issue*, which, when the sufferer does not by his own fault bar the way of salvation, separates the righteous from the wicked. Elihu proceeds, "If then a mediator-angel taketh his part, one of a thousand, that he may show unto man his duty. Then He is gracious to him, and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit, I have received a ransom, (Repentance!) He crieth to God and He showeth Himself gracious to him, he beholdeth his face in joy, and God giveth back unto man his righteousness." The mediating angel represents *all influences from above*, by which the heart of the sufferer is awakened to genuine repentance. The ministering spirits which are sent forth to minister unto them who shall inherit blessedness, (Heb. i. 14,) stand invisible round about the sufferer's bed of anguish, and whisper in his ear. Were it not so, such earthly messengers of God, as Elihu, would speak to the winds. These latter however must also do their part, as we are vividly taught by the example of Elihu.

The second principal passage runs as follows:—"and when they are bound in fetters and held in the cords of affliction. Then showeth he them by their work and their transgressions, that they have *become proud*. (This was another *nota bene* for Job.) He openeth also their ear to admonition, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they then hear and serve, (submitting themselves to God's will and repenting,) they spend their days in prosperity and their years in joy. But if they hear not, they perish by the sword, and die through their own folly. He saveth the wretched by his wretchedness, and openeth by oppression their ear." In these last words we have the quintessence of Elihu's entire argument. The friends also set before Job, in the case of his conversion, the prospect of a return of prosperity and salvation. But to them suffering appeared only as punishment, and they were very far from recognising in it an outflow of the love of God, a disguised grace.

The carrying out of this view occupies the first of Elihu's four discourses. In the *second*, he shows that the position taken up towards God by Job, in maintaining that he has been unrighteously handled, is inconsistent with his own esti-

mate of the divine nature. Job's weak and foolish attack on the divine righteousness makes shipwreck on the glory of the divine nature as manifested in the works of creation. The Omnipotence and wisdom of God, with which we everywhere meet, furnishes an indirect testimony to his righteousness. For the single attributes of the divine nature are all of them but as rays proceeding from the one centre. Where one is, there also must of necessity the others be. How could the being which everywhere shows itself to be most perfect, lay itself open in such a way on this one point? Every witness therefore, in nature, to God's greatness as a Creator, rises against the accusers of God's righteousness. Whoso will bring a charge against God's justice, must first measure himself with the divine omnipotence. If this argumentation proves that God must necessarily be righteous, we shall be all the more ready to enter on the reasons contained in Elihu's second discourse, why God may be just, and yet the righteous suffer. At first sight it must occasion surprise, that the mind of the suffering righteous is directed to the wondrous formation of the clouds, of thunder and lightning, of snow, and afterwards, in the answer of God, to the war-horse, to the hawk, to the raven, to the behemoth or hippopotamus, to the leviathan or crocodile. And yet, more carefully examined, we see that such a course was fully adapted to its purpose. An almighty, all-knowing, and all-wise God, who is not at the same time righteous, is in truth an unthinkable thought. For this reason, those who doubt God's righteousness, are always on the high road to doubt His existence. Pelagianism leads not merely to the destruction of the true idea of God, but also to complete Atheism. It is therefore a great blessing to be, like Job, firmly rooted in God. Then, should we fall into error regarding one side of the divine nature, we shall be able to lift ourselves up by cleaving all the more firmly to another. By and bye, even the dark side will become light.

Elihu's third discourse, (chap. xxxv.,) lays hold on Job again from another side. Job had stood up as if he were in a position to lay claims, and plead merits. He had behaved towards God like an impatient creditor. What perversity! As little as man can harm God by his sin, so little can he benefit Him by his virtue. Hence, when God rewards the righteous-

ness of man, He does it out of pure grace: if he withholds rewards none can bring against Him the charge of injustice. The All-sufficient One does not need man, and it is therefore foolish in us to demand and fume, and murmur. When sufferings come upon us, our only part is, to make sorrowful lament, humbly to beg, patiently to wait, and believingly to hope. Whoso is incapable of this, must blame himself if God does not hear, and the Almighty does not regard, his *vain cries*, that is, the empty pretensions expressed in his prayers.

Elihu's fourth and last discourse falls into two divisions. In the first (that is, up to chap. xxxvi. 21) he carries out more completely what he had previously advanced to prove that the infliction of suffering was not inconsistent with the divine justice—that is, he shows how God afflicts the righteous in order to chastise, purify, and lead him to greater glory, if he allows tribulations to do their proper work. The second division is connected with the subject of the second discourse. God is great in nature: therefore must He also be just. Behold God is great in power: and therefore must He be of great justice and full of righteousness: He dealeth not wrongly. The people must consequently fear Him; He regardeth not those who are wise in their own eyes, nor such as in their self-righteousness would tax him with wrong.

Elihu had apparently ended the dispute. For the friends had previously retired from the arena, and Job, their conqueror, now by his silence confessed himself conquered. Indeed, he had repeatedly mentioned his silence as a sign of his overthrow (chap. vi. 24, 25; xix. 4 ff.) Elihu also had regarded Job's silence as a token that he surrendered himself prisoner: see xxxiii. 31-33, where he says, "If thou hast nothing to say, then hear me and keep silence, I will teach thee wisdom." But what still failed was the divine sanction. This alone could prove to a certainty that Elihu had really stood up as the speaker for God. Moreover it was not a mere question of doctrine. Job was to be born again to a new life, and human efforts alone could not accomplish that. God must directly reveal Himself to him. A true and thorough cure of error in religious things, a real rise to a new stage of the inner life, cannot be effected save by a vision of God. Job himself confesses this in chap. xlii. 5. "By the

hearing of the ear I learnt from thee," (says he to God), "but now mine eye saw thee." Job's earlier religious point of view, notwithstanding his great piety, is thus characterised as a lower one, as one dependent on the traditions of the Fathers and on the Church; which, now that he, having been prepared by his sufferings and by the penitential discourse of Elihu, had been counted worthy of a divine manifestation, gives place to a relation to God which is mainly direct and immediate. All religious doubts arise from our merely perceiving by the hearing of the ear. When we have once seen with the eye, we feel ashamed of our previous incomprehensible folly. It is the greatest misfortune of the time that so few have seen with the eye. For this reason, there are so few even amongst the well-meaning, who walk with a firm and sure step. Hence also deep abysses of doubt lie concealed behind a wall of orthodoxy. In an age of apostacy like ours; in an age when Satan is again let loose from his prison, and seduces the heathen in the four quarters of the earth, the mere hearing with the ear, the mere leaning on the Church, is much more inadequate, than during the days of the dominion of the Christian Faith, when the temptations were far less. Now ought surely every one who counts his own soul dear, to cry with Moses, "Lord, let me see thy glory," and not rest until his cry has been heard. Of course the hearing with the ear is the first step. Had Job haughtily shut his ear to the authority of the Church, his eye would not have seen.—But thorough instruction must ever go before God's personal revelation of Himself. Error, not truly overcome, bars the entrance like a bolt. It is God's method to communicate this instruction to men by means of men. To this end He has given the Holy Scriptures and founded in His Church the office of teacher. In the present instance Elihu discharges the duty. From these observations it would appear that the thing of chief importance is God's *appearance*, not, what He may *say*. Still God cannot appear in silence. A discourse must accompany His appearance, as a kind of commentary thereon. And inasmuch as Elihu had been God's spokesman, God's discourse will naturally neither contradict that of Elihu nor contain anything essentially new. We may also anticipate beforehand that the substance of the divine discourse will be less comprehensive than that of Elihu's. In

one portion of his discourses Elihu laid down a theory on the purpose of life. To enter upon such a subject would scarcely accord with the Majesty of God. From it we should only expect the development of the main idea of the other principal part, the proof that Job's whole behaviour was rooted in his failure to discern the glory of God manifested in all creation —a glory with which righteousness is ever inseparably connected. This subject is a more practical one. It affords constant opportunity for punishing and humbling. Who am I? and, who art thou? These two questions pervade the divine discourse, which indeed consists of questions, for questions are the proper mode of utterance, for majesty in wrath. Had Job in the first instance discovered within, the right answer to these two questions; had he seen that God, as the Almighty, must also be the Righteous One, that God therefore was of necessity in the right, and he himself in the wrong, the second main portion of Elihu's discourse must sink ever deeper into his heart. For God *could* only be in the right, in case the view given by Elihu of the aim of sufferings was the correct one. The issue gave it a full and formal confirmation. Furthermore, the only means of thoroughly setting aside Job's inquiry was the element common to both the discourse of God and that of Elihu. The suppressed doubts would have ever again asserted their sway had it not been shown *how* God is in the right, as well as that He *must* be in the right because He is God, that He must be righteous because He is almighty.

God appears in the *storm* and speaks with Job. In the symbolical language of Scripture storms always bear a *threatening* character. By speaking out of the storm God shows that Job has sinned. God's discourse is an interpretation of the storm in which He appears. "Wilt thou condemn me in order that thou mayest be righteous?" is the voice of the storm, as to Job, so to all who like him murmur against God in sufferings.

The discourses of Elihu are impressed with the seal of a divine mission, by the fact that God's discourse is connected with them, not only by the sameness of idea, but even by the sameness of treatment. Elihu had proved God's glory, and His consequent righteousness, from the wonders on high, from the formation of the clouds, of the lightning, and of the thun-

der. The Divine discourse begins at the same point, and then descends to the earth, to the revelation of the glory of God in the animated creation, where the lion and the raven, the aristocracy and the proletariat of the world of beasts, rise up as witnesses against Job.

Job repents in dust and ashes. His repentance refers, first of all, to his discourses, and then to his entire conduct. Had he been previously himself pure in God's sight, his discourses would also have been pure. What now pains him in his own discourses is the assertion of his own perfect righteousness. The notion that he might lay claim to this had led him into error regarding God, and had thus prepared for him inexpressible suffering. Now his righteousness had become as dust and ashes. The brevity of Job's discourse is remarkable, in contrast with his previous prolixity. Depth of feeling, and especially thorough penitence, is simple in its utterances, and its words are as a tight and closely fitting garment.

The Lord now declares His anger against the three friends, and advises them to beg for the intercession and mediation of Job, who, through his awakening and repentance, had come into a much closer relation to God than formerly. They had deserved this humiliation. In their blindness they had held themselves to be better than Job, in the proportion in which they were happier. Whoso exalteth himself shall be abased; he who sits down at the head of the table of the kingdom of God shall hear the cry, "Give way to this man." To Job, too, was in this way the opportunity given, of showing, by his self-denying love, what inward gain his sufferings had brought him. Forgiving love towards those who had insulted him is made the condition of his restoration: here therefore we have the Old Testament basis of that saying of our Lord's "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your trespasses."

Elihu's promise, that Job's repentance should be followed by the return of his prosperity, begins now to be fulfilled. But Elihu himself is no longer mentioned. God's spokesman retires, and God Himself speaks by word and deed. Praise belongs not to him, for he had only uttered what God had given him. He has no merit; he has only to be thankful for the high grace which God had conferred upon him, in consti-

tuting him the medium of His revelations, and enabling him to lead back his wandering brother from the error of his ways. "When ye have done all, still say, we are unprofitable servants." God makes the fulfilment of his demand lighter for his servants, by treating them thoroughly as unprofitable.

St. James gives the sum of this book in the words, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and ye have seen the end of the Lord: for the Lord is merciful and compassionate." Job gave special proof of his patience or stedfastness, in that, when actually assailed by Satan on his weak side, he still, at the right moment, repented in dust and ashes, so that Satan was forced to retire ashamed, and lost the bet which he, as it were, laid with God at the commencement, when he said, "Of what avail is it, he will bless Thee to Thy face?" A joyful issue is that, when no one concerned receives harm save Satan himself.

The Book of Job has its truth not only for the individual believer, but also for the entire Church, and doubtless the author had this in view when he wrote it. God chastises His Church, but he does not give it over to death; when the way is prepared by His visitations He sends the spirit of penitence and awakenment, and then He Himself returns in grace and condescension to its prison. This happened, for example, when Judah was first carried into exile to Babylon, and then led back home in joy. This will be most gloriously exemplified when the triumphant, shall take the place of the militant, Church. The temporal restoration of the Book of Job is the type, prelude, and pledge of the eternal To bring to light God's rule in this world was the primary mission of the Old Testament. This foundation being laid, it will be but a light matter to illumine the darkness with which the natural mind has covered the future.

The history of Job is a type of the Saviour as well in His sufferings as in the glory which followed. What is specially worthy of our attention is the burning desire felt by Satan for the ruin of the "much persecuted," against whom he stirs up enemies from all sides. If Job's imperfect and needy righteousness was an object of such hatred to Satan, how must he be enraged against Him who is the absolutely righteous one. Immediately after entering on His vocation the Redeemer was

tempted forty days by the devil, and when the devil had ended all his temptations, he departed from Him for a "season." Satan is always in the background of Christ's sufferings. When the time drew nigh that he should be delivered into the hands of sinners, He exclaimed, "the Prince of this world cometh." But as Satan was put to shame by the typical Job, so did his attack on the antitype end in his utter overthrow, "and he overcame not. His place also was no more found in heaven. And he was cast down, the great dragon, the old serpent, who is called the devil, and Satan, who seduces the whole world; he was cast down upon the earth, and his angels were cast down with him."

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

A LECTURE

BY

PROFESSOR DR. HENGSTENBERG.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

THE year 1848 led many persons back to the Old Testament, and especially to the writings of the Prophets, who, in consequence of participating in the so-called "modern culture," had, up to that time, kept themselves at a distance, or even been quite estranged from them. For the circumstances and events of that year the New Testament was not found strictly sufficient. The great questions then agitated had a national character; they bore upon the history of the world. "What is the destiny of our apostate nation? What will result from the spirit of sedition by which Europe has been seized?" The New Testament has mainly to do with the individual soul and its salvation, and then with the development of the Church. The political element in it is but slight. In this respect, as in so many others, we discover that it is a half, needing its complement; and we are reminded of the saying of our Lord, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." The Old Testament, in writing the history of one nation, has written the history of all nations to whom the Lord has revealed Himself: in the fates of the one people, whose character was throughout typical (1 Corinthians x. 6), there is a prophecy of the fates of all peoples. Whoso enters into the spirit of the Old Testament will gain possession of infallible knowledge concerning the future; will learn the laws by which the nations of the world in general, and his own nation in particular, are governed; will in this respect be raised from the ignoble rank of the servant, who knoweth not what his Lord doeth, to that of the Son, whom the Father makes a sharer of His secrets, and to whom He shows all that He Himself doeth, keeping back from him only the day and the

hour, the knowledge of which is the peculiar prerogative of God.

Let us now enter more directly on the subject in hand. Our business, in the first instance, is not with Prophets, and their office, in general, but only with Isaiah. At the same time, be it remembered, the true nature of Old Testament prophecy is best learnt by a consideration of the activity of the prominent individual prophets. One general observation, however, must be premised.

The prophetic element of the Old Testament presents a two-fold aspect. The first aspect under which it appears is that of a free vocation, as opposed to a fixed one, like the Priesthood; of an extraordinary, as contrasted with a regular, office. Such a co-ordination of offices is necessary in all ages of the Church. That which is fixed and regular too easily hardens into formality, if it has not at its side that which is more free: the latter is necessary to goad on, stir up, and excite the zeal of the former, which is ever ready to grow flat, or die out. The too great uniformity of the offices in the earlier period of the existence of the Evangelical Church was no slight evil. In this respect it was at a disadvantage in relation to the Roman Catholic Church, which possessed, in its numerous Orders, an element analogous to the prophetical one of the Old Testament. In the present century efforts have happily begun to be made for the supply of this deficiency, in the institution of the various Christian associations, especially of Home Missions. At the same time, however, it must be remarked, that the activity put forth has hitherto been mainly of a Martha-kind; whereas prophecy was more of the Mary-kind; that is, it was more a channel by which life streamed forth directly from God to the people; it confined itself almost exclusively to the sphere of the preacher. Still, for Old Testament times, the free vocation followed by the prophets was of far greater importance than for the Church of the New Covenant. Then the regular office of the priesthood was connected with birth, and was therefore much more exposed to the danger of hardening into formality. Moreover, the spirit of the law was enveloped in a garb of ceremonial precepts, and the priests, who, from youth up, had to do with external forms and observances, were in great danger of regarding them as having independent

worth, and of thus forgetting the ideas and truths which were the soul of the pregnant allegory. Yielding to this tendency, they would contradict Moses, by whom the law was given, and who summed up its precepts in the one command, which it is impossible to take upon our lips without fear and trembling, "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy powers," thus allowing to the external no other significance than that of a means to an end. Against such servants of the letter, the prophets, as the servants of the spirit, were compelled to stand up. So did Isaiah, for example, when, in chapter i. of his Prophecies, he raises his voice against those who, instead of offering to the high and holy God that sacrifice of the heart claimed by Him under the form of the sacrifice of beasts, brought as a substitute mere burnt-offerings of rams, and the blood of bullocks, of lambs and of goats.

Most of those who bore the name of Prophet were limited to this aspect of the prophetic office. Strictly speaking, however, the name refers to the other and higher side of the prophetical vocation; and it pertained to the great mass of those who were usually styled prophets, only because they were comprehended, as under their head, among the few chosen ones who truly represented the higher aspect:—of them and their position the expression, "*Sons* of the Prophets," was more accurately designative. The Hebrew word for prophet, *Nabi*, designates one who has Divine communications, who is privileged with *inspiration*,—inspiration, too, as we are expressly taught by the other name of the prophet, "Seer or Beholder," in the strictest sense, such, namely, as is imparted in the state of transport or ecstasy. This high gift was naturally only conferred on the few. Divine revelations did not terminate with Moses, for the Holy Scriptures could not arise otherwise than in the course of centuries. They could not be given in the form of a catechism, or of a doctrinal system. Divine truths must enter into life in the most living manner, connected with, and in relation to, the greatest possible variety of historical developments. Moreover, it was necessary, at all events in part, that living organs of direct Divine communications should be given to compensate the disadvantage at which the Church of earlier times was placed in relation to

that of later times, as regards Holy Scripture. When human relations, in their greatest variety, had been illumined by the light of the word of God, when Holy Scripture had reached its conclusion, then prophecy ceased. Malachi is the last of the prophets under the Old Covenant. Prophecy was once again awakened under the New Covenant, but it came very speedily to a close with John. What the twelve apostles are, whose usual consciousness was so elevated that their inspiration did not in general need to take the form of ecstasy, such are also the prophets for ever. They live on in their writings. The position which was occupied by the prophets under the Old Covenant, those who are learned in the Scriptures, the Scribes, have been deputed by our Lord to occupy in His kingdom. Under the New Covenant they are the spiritual householders, who bring forth from their treasure things new and old (Matthew xiii. 52). Whoso will not hear Moses and the prophets, whoso will not hear the Holy Scriptures, him, according to the infallible declaration of our Lord, it is impossible to help. Imitations only corrupt the blessing instituted by God.

The body of Prophets derived its life and significance from the high truths which, through Moses, had taken up their abode and citizenship in the Church of God. Even at the time of Moses we may find traces of the beginnings of this body. In the age of the Judges it exerted a not unimportant influence. In Samuel it was first represented by an imposing personality. But it was only a considerable period later that the tree of prophecy bore fruits fitted to be stored up in the treasure-house of Holy Scripture. Our canonical prophecies first began in the eighth century before Christ, that is, about seven centuries after Moses and two after David. That there must have been at this time mighty impulses towards prophecy is plain enough from the fact that then, all at once, there arose quite a number of important prophets; whereas, previously, in the kingdom of Judah, the prophetic element had manifested itself only sporadically. From this time onwards Israel became more and more interwoven with the Asiatic monarchies; first of all with the Assyrian. The way was being prepared for the great judgments which the Lord purposed to execute on his people by means of these empires;

consequently the task of the Prophets became a much grander one. They had to direct attention to the judgments of the Lord, to explain them, to awaken the minds of the people to a consciousness of God's punitive righteousness and sustaining grace. A much wider sphere was then opened up for prophecy, in its narrower sense, as the foretelling of events. Especially did the proclamations of the Messiah now become fuller and more distinct. In opposition to the worldly power, which threatened the kingdom of God with overthrow, is set that kingdom which was destined, through Christ, to conquer and to rule over the world. This is presented as a source of consolation to minds troubled and cast down by present circumstances. In the light thereof the faithful of the Old Testament wandered forth into darkness. The preaching of repentance also gained stronger motives and a higher tone. *Nothing is more startling than the feeling which possesses our own generation also, that we stand at the beginning of the end.* First, at the period of Jewish history alluded to, when the prophetic vocation was in circumstances to develope its full power, did it become important for all ages; and the divinely originated conviction that such was the case, impelled the prophets to record their prophecies, not in the form of loose and scattered leaves, but in that of books which should be parts of a codex of sacred writings.* The same feeling also induced others to have a care for their permanent preservation.

The chief prophetical figure during this first period of canonical prophecies, that is, during the Assyrian period, is Isaiah; as during the second, that is, the Babylonian period, Jeremiah was the chief figure. With Isaiah were connected, in the kingdom of Judah, Micah, Joel, and Obadiah; in the kingdom of Israel, Hosea, Amos, and Jonah, who were its only three prophets. The overthrow of the kingdom of the ten tribes was effected by the Assyrian power, because the measure of its sins was already full. Out of the same conflict Judah issued victorious, and first, more than a century

* This is indicated with special distinctness in Isaiah xxxiv. 16, where, to those who read the prophecy after it had been fulfilled, Isaiah says, "Search in the book of the Lord and read." What the prophet means is, that they ought to compare the prophecy, recorded in the book of the Lord, with history, in order to convince themselves that it had been exactly fulfilled.

later, succumbed to the might of the Chaldeans. Unlike Israel, its downfal was not a permanent one. The kingdom of Judah underwent a joyous resurrection. Indeed its recovery in this case was unavoidable and necessary, for it had not yet fulfilled its destiny of producing the Messiah from its midst. King Uzziah, in the last years of whose reign Isaiah began his work, ruled till 759 years before Christ. Isaiah, consequently, entered on his vocation about ten years before the founding of Rome, or in the year 753 before Christ.

It is a remarkable instance of the play of that divine providence, which directs in such a special manner the affairs of the Church, that there occur in sacred history so many names pregnant with meaning. Isaiah, for example, signifies "the salvation of the Lord."* This is also, to such an extent, the watchword of his prophecies, that their substance could not have been with one word more strikingly described. So also the name Jeremiah, signifying, "the Lord casts down," precisely describes the nature of his prophecies, in which *threatening* decidedly predominates. In Isaiah, of course, there are not wanting severe punishments and threats: he belonged not to those who strengthen the hands of sinners, who, slightly healing the hurt of the people (Jeremiah vi. 14), cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" who make cushions for under the arms of the people and pillows for their heads. In Israel that was the business only of the false prophets, whose distinctive characteristic it was to preach Gospel without law, a thing worse even than law without Gospel. He had a hard battle to fight with those who said to the seers, "See not for us right things; preach unto us smooth things; see for us deceits." But in Isaiah threats never form the termination; they invariably pass into promises; and whereas, in the great mass of Jeremiah's prophecies, promises, which no true prophet can entirely lack, are usually brief, and in the form of hints, consisting frequently only of words thrown out into the midst of the severest threats, as, for example, in chap. iv. 27, "Yet will I not make a full end," in Isaiah streams of

* Dr Hengstenberg brings an illustration of this supposed divine sport from modern times—the case of Wegscheider, the celebrated vulgar-rationalistic theologian. The name means literally "way-divider," and Dr H. asks, "What more suitable name for such a *deformator* could have been invented?"—Tr.

the richest fulness pour forth from the source of consolation; and as if he had not, in this respect, done enough in the first part of his work, he adds a second part, from chap. xl.-lxvi., in which promises still more decidedly predominate. The reason of this peculiarity must be specially sought in the historical circumstances. Isaiah belonged to a time when the corruption of the kingdom of Judah had by far not reached its lowest point, when there was still a considerable number of men who associated themselves with, and looked up to him as their spiritual centre. Looking at these societies of brethren of like spirit, Isaiah cries: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." The contemporary prophets of the kingdom of the ten tribes, which had been poisoned at its very origin, found a different state of things: the field there was already ripe to the harvest of judgment. In the days of Jeremiah Judah had already become like its apostate sister. "Run ye to and fro through the lanes of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in its streets if ye can find a man, if there be one that doeth justice, that seeketh faithfulness, and I will pardon it," says the Lord, in Jeremiah v. 1. Then the duty of a prophet was less to console the miserable, than to terrify the secure, sinners. Only after the anger of God had manifested itself in deeds, only after the judgment of destruction had gone over Jerusalem, or was drawing very nigh, did the stream of promise burst unrestrainedly forth in Jeremiah, as also in Ezekiel.

The mission of Isaiah had special reference to the house of Judah. He but seldom occupies himself with the kingdom of Israel; and when this happens, as in chap. ix. 7, ff., xvii. 1, ff., it is always with a reference to, and for the sake of exerting an influence on, Judah. The scene of his activity was Jerusalem, the political and religious centre of the nation. There, all his discourses were delivered. The citizens thereof are not unfrequently specially addressed by him. A prophet of such thorough importance could only come forth at the centre of the nation's life and activity. Such a centre was Jerusalem, in a much higher degree, than are the chief cities of modern kingdoms; for its temple was the only place of sacrifice for the whole people,—it was the spiritual dwelling-place of the Jews, in which they were obliged at certain seasons to present

themselves, even outwardly, before the Lord. But, in fact, the prophetic element in the kingdom of Judah seems to have been almost exclusively associated with Jerusalem. The reason thereof was, that the mission of the Prophets of Judah was mainly a national one. In the kingdom of Israel, on the contrary, where they had to fill up the gap caused by the expulsion of the legitimate priesthood, and where, consequently, it devolved upon them, regularly to instruct and to edify the people, their activity was not confined to the metropolis, but was diffused throughout the entire land.

According to chap. vii. and viii., Isaiah was married, and mention is made of his two sons, Shearjashub and Mahershalal-hashbaz. The connecting of the names of both with his prophecies, shows how much he lived and moved in his vocation. Even his children he had not for himself: the Lord had given them for signs and for wonders in Israel, (chap. viii. 18:) they also were a sermon to the people, as we see especially from chap. vii., where the prophet is said to take with him the one of his sons, Shearjashub, solely in order that, looking on him, the people may be brought to see the folly of its fears. In the two names were expressed the two main elements of his prophetical discourses. The one, signifying—"Robbery hastens, quickly comes spoil," points to the energy of the divine justice, which visits the sins both of the heathen world, and of the covenant people: the other, Shearjashub, signifying, "the rest will return," draws attention to the grace which the Lord will show in sustaining His people and kingdom, even in the midst of destruction,—it drew notice to the fact, that judgments on the people of God, unlike those on the godless world, always bear at last the peaceable fruits of righteousness, if not to large multitudes, yet at all events, to a small number; and also to the fact, that these few will be restored, after the execution of the judgments, to the full enjoyment of the divine favour. Zion can never be lost, whatever else is lost. The Lord may indeed chastise it, but he will not give it over to death. Isaiah's being able to call his wife Nebijah, "Prophetess," shows that his marriage did not stand in opposition to, or merely go alongside of, his vocation, but that it was most closely connected therewith. This name, Nebijah could not bear merely as the wife of a prophet,—for, as in our days the

worst foes of the office of preacher, are often the very wives of the preachers themselves, so was it then. She could only bear it, so far as she herself was endowed with a prophetic gift, like Miriam the sister of Moses, or Deborah in the times of the Judges, or Hulda in the days of Jeremiah. The mere name, therefore, introduces us to the very inmost nature of the marriage relation. The wife did not certainly appear in public. She mainly fulfilled her prophetical vocation by aiding and encouraging her husband in his. Even the garb of the prophet was chosen in adaptation to his office. According to chap. xx. 2, he was clad in a garment of hair, like Elijah, John the Baptist, and the two witnesses in the Revelations, (chap. xi. 3.) The garment of sackcloth formed a contrast to sumptuous clothing, to expose the condemnableness of which Isaiah had a peculiar mission. The *locus classicus* of sacred Scripture against fondness for dress and ornament, is chap. iii., where the prophet enters into such minute detail, that we may well assume that the prophetess rendered him the aid for which her sex peculiarly fitted her. Sackcloth was the garment of mourners and penitents. Sorrow at the lamentable state of the Holy City, anguish at the desolation of the Church, earnestness in repentance and in summoning others to repentance—these are still the characteristic marks of the true servants of the Lord. In that which he does himself, the prophet shows the people what they ought to do. His very appearance preached, "Repent ye," even before he opened his mouth.

We remarked already that the prophet entered on his calling in the last years of Uzziah's reign. Under the long government of this monarch, the kingdom of Judah rose to great wealth and power. His name, signifying, "the Lord is my strength," found full confirmation. The spirit of piety manifested by him afforded opportunity for the verification of the name. He restored the southern and south-western boundaries to something like the position they occupied in the days of David and Solomon. But the people was incapable of bearing its prosperity. Those prophetic words of Moses, (Deuteronomy xxxii. 15,) "Then waxed Israel fat, and kicked, forsook God his Creator, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," received their fulfilment. Externally, the condition of religion seemed still tolerably good; coarse idolatry was

still comparatively rare; they were very zealous in offering sacrifices to the Lord, in visiting the temple, in the celebration of the feasts, and even in the prayers of the lip, (chapter i. 11-15;) but, notwithstanding, great and deep evils existed. This we learn especially from the first five chapters of Isaiah, in which he does battle most zealously and distinctly with the carnal security of the nation, with its proud confidence in its power, and with the external piety which only concealed intense haughtiness and corruption of heart, and a fearful decay of virtue and manners. Pride, the bosom-sin of the people, against which the prophet gives a so energetic testimony in chap. ii. and iii., at last seized hold of the king also. In his old age, when his adviser, Zechariah, "who had understanding in the visions of God," had died, the thought occurred to Uzziah of uniting the highest spiritual with the highest civil dignity; contrary to the law of God. He offered incense in the Temple. He was visited with leprosy, a disease, which, as the symbol of sin, was a peculiarly suitable punishment, in cases when it was necessary to make publicly manifest sin which concealed itself under the appearance of good; as Uzziah had concealed his presumption beneath the garb of a peculiarly great piety. The leprous king, who, as an unclean man, could not continue to hold the reins of government, was a true type of the people of his age.

It was a matter of importance that, in the reign of Uzziah, when the nation was in the full tide of its prosperity, the prophet, like a faithful watchman, (to which the prophets frequently compare themselves,) proclaimed loudly the imminence of the catastrophe threatened by Moses. In like manner did Hosea make the same proclamation to the kingdom of Israel during its palmiest days.

Asserting, as he did, that a terrible storm was threatening, whilst the heavens were to all appearance bright and cloudless, the prophet made himself ridiculous in the eyes of very many. From all sides he heard the satirical cry, "Let make speed and come the purpose of the Holy One of Israel, that we may see it." But he did not allow himself to be misled thereby. He was thoroughly persuaded of the truth and applicability of the words, "where the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together." He looked on the moral condition of the

people with the eye of God: he saw that its sin was becoming riper every day: he recognised in God that the time was not far distant when the measure should be full.

The death of King Uzziah was the occasion of the prophet's looking back earnestly on the past, and of his anxiously enquiring of the Lord in respect of the future. "Dost thou then thank the Lord thy God, thou mad and foolish nation?" Hast thou experienced so much grace,—during fifty-two years the Lord had been the strength of His people,—and yet do all signs betoken, not repentance, but rather, increasing apostacy? Will He once again thoroughly renew His people? Or are His *judgments* about to break? And, in the latter case, may we expect grace, at all events, after justice has done its work?

The answer to these uneasy questions is given to the prophet in chap. vi. by means of a vision. Many have falsely supposed that the first calling of Isaiah to the office of prophet is there described. He sees the Lord in all the fulness of His glory,—in the full energy of that righteousness, which casts down all sanguine hopes to the ground, and in the full energy of that grace and faithfulness which prevents all despairing thoughts. Then the interpretation is given to him by the words which he is appointed to proclaim amongst the people. The judgment advances with inexorable strictness. But from the ruin of the whole nation, a holy seed is preserved.

One might fancy, after such a sharp and distinct proclamation, that the judgment would at once begin to be executed. God, however, as Bengel says, has His *horas* and *moras*: He never hurries anything on: He only puts sickle to the harvest when it has become completely white. The sixteen years of Jotham's government passed quite smoothly by. We may well suppose that God regarded the piety of the king, concerning whom it is said, "and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord (the sin by which Uzziah fell), but the people still corrupted themselves."

A beginning was made of the fulfilment of the threats of punishment, when impiety ascended the throne in the person of Ahaz. In the very first year of his reign the Kings of Damascus and Samaria, having formed a league, broke into the

land, with the design of putting an end to the kingdom. This was one of the most important crises in the history of Israel. Assyria came into the country in consequence of this war. In the footsteps of that empire came afterwards the succeeding great powers of Europe and Asia. Hitherto Israel had only had to deal with the smaller surrounding nations. But from this time onwards it was involved in struggles with the great kingdoms of the world. A remarkable proof that the spirit which filled the prophets was a higher than their own, is the fact that Isaiah, according to the important prophecy recorded in chap. vii., recognized so clearly and distinctly the significance of the decisive point. That he should have earnestly warned the king against seeking the help of Assyria is not to be accounted for by grounds of ordinary worldly policy. Politically it could make but a slight difference whether Ahaz sought the help of the Assyrians or not. On the contrary, if he did so, the King of Assyria must of course be more favourably disposed towards him. We can scarcely doubt that the Assyrians would have pressed forwards towards Western Asia even if Ahaz had not summoned them to his aid. If they once came into those regions, to chastise the pride of the Syrians and Ephramites, who were endeavouring to make conquests and become powerful, Judah also would be in danger from them. *Isaiah rather throughout takes up the position of the man of God.* To enter into leagues with other monarchs was not totally forbidden to the kings of the people of God. But such leagues must belong to the category of human aids sanctioned by God. This, however, was not now the case. Assyria was a thoroughly selfish power, whose aim was to make conquests. Its assistance must be bought with vassalage, and with the danger of utter downfall: "to stay themselves on it, was to stay themselves on their destroyer," (Isaiah x. 20.) Such a league involved practical denial of the God of Israel, a contempt of His omnipotence and grace. On behalf of God, therefore, the Prophet had no alternative but to oppose it. Had Ahaz obeyed him, had he limited himself to using the human means lent him by God, not putting his trust in them but in the Lord, his Lord would have delivered him, as at a later period He delivered Hezekiah, first from Aram and Ephraim, and then from Assyria. We need not

however, regard the mission of the prophet as a fruitless one, because Ahaz did not follow his counsels. The Lord who sent him knew beforehand what would be the result of his effort. The great purpose of his interference was, to establish clearly before the event took place, that Israel's embroilment with the great powers of the world had been brought about by the crimes of the house of David, and that, therefore, it should not give rise to doubts of God's omnipotence and grace, whose help had been offered, but contemptuously rejected.

In close connection with the great crisis at which the history of the people of God had now arrived, stands the greater fulness, richness and clearness which then began to characterise the promises and proclamations of the Messiah. From this time onwards Christ is represented to Judah as an Immanuel against the kingdoms of the world, as the one who shall at last, on His appearance, overcome the world, and lay it at the feet of the people of God. And this promise has, in truth, been fulfilled already, and will be still more completely fulfilled, through Him who said to His disciples, "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," and who, even before our very eyes, has begun a new and mighty course of victories, breaking to pieces, like a potter's vessel, the framework of the Turkish and Chinese powers. Before the minds of such as were troubled and anxious lest the throne of David should be utterly overthrown by the Assyrians, Isaiah sets the glorious picture of the kingdom of Judah in its final perfection. If the faithful took this truly to heart, the King of Assyria must appear to them in an entirely different light: they must regard him, in fact, as a miserable wretch. The giant shrunk at once, after such promises, into a contemptible dwarf, and they themselves, with the tears still moistening their eyes, were forced to laugh at themselves for having been so terribly afraid.

That which is of the flesh, is flesh, but the Spirit breathes where he wills. The proverb, that "the apple does not fall far from the trunk," has, God be praised! only a limited application. Grace gains the victory over nature. As Ahaz was distinguished by ungodliness, so was his son Hezekiah distinguished by his deep and living fear of God. In consequence thereof there was a pause in the development of corruption,

and, therefore, also in the execution of the divine judgments. By the reformation of Hezekiah many things that were ready to die were revived. Under this king, who was Isaiah's spiritual son, and with whom he had one heart and one soul, the activity of the prophet first reached its greatest extent and importance. His work was never so glorious and telling as in the very critical fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. Then the Assyrians broke into the land, after having, in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, made an end of the kingdom of the ten tribes. All rationalists, all men of a merely natural sound understanding, despaired: for it was in truth utterly irrational to hope. Hezekiah believed, and prayed, "O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, and thou only." Then sent Isaiah to Hezekiah, saying to him, "thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, whereas thou hast prayed to me, in the matter of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, this is that which the Lord speaketh concerning him, "the virgin the daughter of Zion, despiseth thee, and laugheth thee to scorn, and the daughter of Jerusalem shaketh her head at thee." Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? Against whom hast thou exalted thy voice? And thou liftest up thine eyes against the Holy One of Israel. Because thou ragest against me, and thy pride is come up into mine ears, I will put a ring in thy nose, and a bit in thy mouth, and will lead thee back by the way by which thou camest." This promise of immediate divine assistance was fulfilled; whilst, on the contrary, the hope which the worldly-minded had set on the help of the Egyptians, and which the prophet had sternly censured, proved itself deceptive. Just when the Assyrian army intended to strike a decisive blow against Jerusalem, the head of the kingdom of God, the greatest part of it was suddenly destroyed by a divine judgment, by a terrible plague, which afterwards laid hold on, without however terminating the life, of the king, in order that he might not exalt himself above the great grace vouchsafed to him.

In reference to the position taken by Isaiah in this year of horror and of grace, Luther remarks, "he stands firmly as a rock with his promise that Jerusalem should be defended and delivered; which miracle is one of the greatest recorded in the

Scriptures, not merely as regards the fact that so mighty a monarch should have been smitten by God before Jerusalem, but also as regards the faith which could believe in the promised rescue. It is a miracle, I say, that a man in Jerusalem could believe in an event apparently so impossible. There must undoubtedly have been many unbelievers who not only laughed at him, but heaped on him words of contempt. Notwithstanding, he breaks through all by his immoveable faith—by the faith which alone had smitten so mighty a monarch. Whence it is sufficiently apparent, that Isaiah must have been a great and precious man, and highly esteemed in God's sight."

During this year, the most remarkable in the prophet's life, and rich in those judgments and acts of grace by which the divine glory was manifested, his prophecies issued forth in a full stream, spreading themselves out in all directions. He touched not only on the fates of Judah, but also on those of the heathen nations. He speaks, moreover, not merely of the phases which history would take in the immediate future, but, from the position of ecstasy which he occupied during this whole time, his eye surveyed also the remotest events. He saw especially how, at a future day, the Babylonish power, now already laying its foundations, would take the place of the Assyrian; and how it would find the fields of Judah white for the harvest: he saw that the overthrow of the oppressor of the world would be effected by Cyrus, the victor from the west, who would let the people of God return from their banishment: he beheld at the close of that development of affairs which then commenced, the deliverer of the world, whose portrait he paints in the liveliest colours. Isaiah gives a specially distinct description of the prophetical and high-priestly offices of Christ; whereas earlier utterances relate, in great part, only to his kingly office. One allusion, however, to the high-priestly character of Christ there exists even so early as Psalm cx. Of the two *States* of Christ, Isaiah treats especially of that of humiliation; he brings the Messiah prominently forward as suffering. At an earlier period, on the contrary, it is Christ's state of glory that is specially described; though none give more glorious pictures even of that, than Isaiah, when his object is to counteract the fears entertained,

that, through the pressure of the mighty heathen nations, God's kingdom would be overthrown. The first strokes of his picture of the humiliated, suffering, atoning Christ, are in chap. xi. 1, "and there shall come forth a rod out of the hewn down stem of Jesse, and a branch will bear fruit out of his roots." According to this, Christ could only come when all the glory of the stem of David had previously vanished, when that stem was hewn down even to the roots, and no longer bore the aspect of its royal, but of its rustic, ancestor. Herein is contained consolation for the Church in times when it seems to be rapidly going down hill. This aspect, however, of the prophet's proclamation, is properly the subject of the *second part*, which was intended rather for the select few, than for the people at large. There, in chapter xlvi., the servant of God is presented to us as the meek, and, from the heart, humble Redeemer, who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, and who, by this His compassionate love, will establish justice in the whole earth. In chapter xlix. a description is given of the manner in which the covenanted people will reward the faithful labours of the servant of God with ingratitude, so that he will be compelled to exclaim, "I have laboured in vain, and I have spent my strength for nought and in vain:" but we are at the same time told that, in recompence for the obstinacy of Israel, the Lord will give him the heathen for his inheritance. In chapter i. the sufferings of the servant of God are depicted, in that aspect of them which is common both to Christ, the Head, and to His members: we are told how, in the fulfilment of his calling, he will present his back to the smiters, and will not hide his face from disgrace and spitting. And finally, in chapter liii., that crowning point of the prophecies of the Old Testament, concerning which Luther said that, as a matter of life and death, every Christian ought to be able to repeat it from memory, Christ is set before us in the highest aspect of His work, to wit, in connection with His atoning and vicarious sufferings; and as being in Himself at once the true High Priest, and the true atoning sacrifice. Alluding to this proclamation, John the Baptist designated Christ, the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world. The words of this prophecy—"He bore our sickness and carried our sorrows,

He was wounded for our transgression, and bruised for our iniquities; the punishment lies on him, that we might have peace, and by His wounds we are healed,"—are deeply engraven in the hearts of all who are at all acquainted with Christ.

There are, besides, the following peculiar Messianic elements in the writings of Isaiah. A bright and clear Old Testament testimony to the divinity of Christ is furnished by chapter ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government is on his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful Counsellor, God-hero, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." As a Counsellor, he is a marvel, because his whole person is marvellous. He is a God-hero:—a hero infinitely transcending all human heroes, in that he is God, in that he is El. The event of Christ's birth from a virgin, which stands in immediate connection with His Godhead, is recorded by Matthew in such a manner that Isaiah's words in chap. vii. 14, form the prominent feature of the narrative. According to the same Evangelist (Matthew iv. 13-16), the Lord took up his abode on the Galilean Sea, in order that might be fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (chap. ix. 10), which says that Galilee, and in general, the neighbourhood of the sea of Gennesareth, though hitherto covered with peculiar disgrace, should be raised to special honour by the appearance of the Redeemer, who should come to take compassion on the miserable, and to seek the lost. Isaiah, too, was the first to announce that the Redemption would do away with the effects of the fall on the irrational creation, and bring it back to the state in which it was in Paradise; "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the goat; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them, etc." (chap. xi. 6-9). He first proclaimed to the people of God, that *death*, as it had not existed in the beginning, so it would be abolished in the end: "he destroyeth death for ever, and the Lord wipeth away tears from all faces," (chap. xxv. 8, with which compare xxvi. 19). And, lastly, Isaiah describes the healing powers which would be communicated to the poor human race, through Christ, in those words of chap. xxxv. 5, 6, which were so remarkably confirmed by the actual results,—"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then

shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing,"—words, however, which did but begin to be fulfilled in the cures effected by Christ during his earthly course. His wonderful cures in Judea were only, as it were, the pledge and prelude of the true and complete healing of humanity, just as his raisings from the dead were but anticipations of the future universal resurrection. The real and comprehensive fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy belongs to the time concerning which it has been said, "that which here is full of suffering, sighs and complainings, will then enjoy full, vigorous, and glorious life."

Isaiah's prophetic work terminated with the reign of Hezekiah. This is clearly proved by the superscription in chap. i. 1. But according to the tradition, he ended his life during the reign of Hezekiah's son and successor, Manasseh, who, to the utmost of his ability, destroyed the good which his pious father had wrought. He introduced all kinds of idolatry and superstition, and even went so far as to erect altars to idol gods in the Temple. Impiety now again boldly lifted up its head. In Manasseh, the ungodly party, which counted very many, especially of the great, amongst its adherents, rose to the throne and power. He was a king according to the heart of the people; that is, of the great mass of the nation, in contrast to the always comparatively small and select number which really feared God. Hence the judgments, which were primarily the result of his ungodliness, were not altogether undeserved by the nation at large. In the king was concentrated the sin of the people. From the days of Solomon down to that great catastrophe, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, a corrupt and sinful party continually existed in the kingdom of Judah. All that the governments of godly kings could do was, not to break it entirely up, but only to restrain, hinder, and repress it in its manifestations, which naturally assumed a more violent and unbridled form, as soon as external liberty was secured. Accordingly we find that, after every reformation, wickedness not only returned, but assumed larger proportions than before. In its opposition to the higher principles, the lower is carried on to ever greater lengths: it is driven necessarily to seek to perfect itself, until at last the measure of sin is full, and the flood of Divine judgment rushes

in to do its righteous work. Before such a consummation no true and thorough reformation was possible. It must be preceded by the sweeping of the thrashing-floor, and the burning of the chaff with unquenchable fire. Such devouring judgments, such great reckonings, occur frequently in the history of the people of God: and the nearer they approach the more impossible does it become for the servants of God to exert a wide and thorough influence. Nothing can be more perverse than the opinion, that in this matter all that is required is, that we should run and make haste, as if the fault lay solely with the witnessing Church, when no national conversion to God is effected. Did the Lord of glory Himself, and His holy apostles, accomplish any such work? But we must not, therefore, suppose, that the activity of the godly and devoted kings, and of the prophets, who stood at their side and strengthened their hands, was lost. It served, at all events, to save what was to be saved, to sustain and gather together the little flock. And if it did nothing else but ripen the mass of the nation for judgment, and give opportunity to the evil to become worse and worse through its conflict with the good, it was well rewarded. Even judgment brings glory to the Lord: He sanctifies Himself in those who will not sanctify Him. Furthermore, judgments themselves are a means of grace, for nothing can befal the Church of God which is not also a grace, whatever else it may be, and however its true character may be disguised. When sin has ripened, and its punishment has begun, the people returns to itself, becomes wise, and repents: and then the select few who had remained faithful form again the central point around which the whole nation gathers itself. Of Manasseh it is said, in 2 Kings xxi. 16, "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." That this innocent blood was that of the prophets, and of such as joined themselves to them as their spiritual centre and leaders, is clear from the context. Immediately before it is related how the prophets worked zealously to prevent the apostasy of Manasseh. If Isaiah still lived at the time of that persecution—and 2 Chronicles xxxii. 32, where he is said to have written a life of king Hezekiah, whom consequently he must have outlived, would seem to warrant the supposition—he must have been one of

the first to fall a sacrifice to it. He was regarded as the main spiritual originator of the pressure with which, for twenty-nine years, impiety had been burdened. Against him its hate was concentrated, for on him, above all others, had the Spirit of the Lord rested. Thus far do the books of the Old Testament carry us. At this point we meet with a tradition, which expressly reports that Isaiah was counted worthy to suffer martyrdom, in extreme old age, under Manasseh, and that he was, in fact, sawn to pieces. This tradition is widely spread, both in Jewish and Oriental writings. Not only do the Fathers of the Church mention it, such as Ambrose, who says, "More easy was it for the saw to divide the framework of the body of Isaiah than to bend his faith;" but even men of the second century of the Christian Church, such as Justin Martyr, who reproaches the Jews with having sawn Isaiah to pieces with a wooden saw. Even in the New Testament there is a trace of the same tradition. We find in it an explanation of the words, "they were sawn asunder," which occur in the description given in the sufferings of the prophets, in the epistle to the Hebrews (see chap. xi. 37), and plainly allude to some special case.

The prophetic work of Isaiah terminated, then, with the reign of Hezekiah. Probably, however, his death did not occur till Manasseh occupied the throne, and then he was martyred, after having, in the evening of his life, made a collection of his prophecies, which he left as a bequest to after generations. The manner of Isaiah's own death presignified the treatment to which his prophecies have been subjected. The naturalism of the last century has sawn him asunder afresh in his prophecies. In both cases the moving principle was the same—namely, the hatred which the natural man has of everything which comes forth directly from the living God, from whom he desires to be freed at any cost.

Let us now cast a glance at the arrangement of the collection. The principle of the order is that of time. In the first six chapters a view is given of the work of the prophet under Uzziah and Jotham. What follows, up to chapter x. 4, belongs to the time of Ahaz. All that intervenes between this and chapter xxxv. pertains to the period of the Assyrian invasion, which took place during Hezekiah's reign, and in the presence

of which Isaiah displayed his prophetical gifts, in a manner previously unequalled. The historical section, from chapter xxxvi. to chapter xxxix., in which the prophet furnishes the basis for the understanding of the prophecies uttered by him during the most important and productive period of his vocation, forms the transition from the first part to the second, commencing with chapter xl. The close thereof is formed by the proclamation of the leading away of Judah to Babylon, which Isaiah uttered to Hezekiah, after that, as the preceding chapters record, the danger threatened by the Assyrians had been happily averted. It is said, in chap. xxxix. 6, 7, "Behold, the days come that all that is in thy kingdom will be taken away, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left, saith the Lord: and of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away: and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Herein is concentrated, as it were, the chastising and threatening aspect of the prophet's mission, and occasion furnished for the consolation to which the second part of his prophecies is mainly devoted.

The substance of this second part is, in a general way, set before us in the very first words of the fortieth chapter—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is atoned, that she receiveth at the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Accordingly we should expect consolation to be mainly characteristic of the second part. But inasmuch as, for the people of God there is no merely external salvation, inasmuch as its salvation is inseparably connected with repentance, admonition must necessarily go hand in hand with the proclamation of redemption. In the portion immediately following, where the preacher, in the desert of wickedness, calls upon all to prepare the way of the Lord, whose glory is about to be revealed, special stress is laid on this second, less prominent and less visible, element. Repentance, which can alone give us access to salvation, is that preparation of the way which the prophet requires.

The consolation is, for the most part, very general in its character, consisting in references to a future full of grace and

good. In some parts, however, the proclamation of deliverance takes a more special, individual shape. Such special announcements refer to a twofold object. The prophet, in the *first* instance, comforts the people with the prospect of restoration from the exile in Babylon. This he describes under the loveliest images, which are frequently borrowed from the history of the deliverance of the nation from Egypt. It must, however, be remarked, that even those prophecies, which mainly refer to the lower object, contain elements of a wider and fuller range, so that they by no means become antiquated when their primary purpose has been answered. Before the prophet's spiritual eye stood the king of the morning, who, being commissioned by the Lord, should chastise the oppressors of Zion, and lead back the people to its home. The *second* subject of his descriptions is the redemption to be effected by the servant of God, by Christ, who, after having endured humiliation, suffering, and death, and having thereby wrought out an atonement, would, in the glorified kingdom of God, do away with all the evils introduced by sin.

The first part consists of single discourses. The second forms a connected whole. It falls, as Rückert first recognised, into three books. The first indication of this is the fact that at the end of chapters xlviii. and lix., the same thought occurs, namely, the exclusion of the wicked from the redemption of the future, expressed in the same words, namely, "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The first book is occupied with the lower, outward deliverance. After chapter xlviii. nothing more is said concerning Babylon, concerning the Chaldeans, concerning the conqueror from the East. The second book contains the proclamation of the personal Messiah, which is wanting in the first, with the exception of chap. xlii. 1-9 where, after the first announcement had been made of the coming of the author of the lower deliverance, a contrast is *anticipatorily* drawn between him and the author of the higher deliverance, to give a more complete picture of whom is the task of the second book. What is said of the person of the Redeemer in the third book is brief and in the form of hints, designed to form a connecting link between it and the second. So far as the character of this book is one of *promise*, it is occupied with the delineation of the glory of the kingdom of God in the new phase on which it will enter through

the work of the Redeemer—a glory which will be consummated in the foundation of a new heaven and a new earth. Such a description of the glory of Zion as is contained in chap. lx. cannot be found in parts second and first. In the third book, however, *chastisement* and *admonition* predominate. That the fathers of the Church justly designated Isaiah the Evangelist among the prophets, is plain from the fact that he only deals largely in threatenings and punishments at the conclusion, and after having unfolded the richest and fullest promises. It is further evident also from the fact that he does not deal in threatenings alone even in the last book, but interweaves promises the most glorious and the most signally adapted to draw sinners to repentance.

What is the deepest and sorest wound of our own age? It is that it has lost its sense of the brightness and distinctness of the image of God! For this wound the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, whether rightly or wrongly understood, is not a sufficient cure: here, however, an excellent specific is offered to us. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne high and lifted up: Seraphim stood above Him, and one cried to the other and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Saboath, all lands are full of His glory. This is the ground in which all his prophecies are rooted, out of which they draw their life. They set God livingly before our eyes. They exhibit Him to us in the fulness and absolute energy of His *punitive justice*, and teach us to regard our own sin, and the sin of our nation, not with our own, but with God's eyes. "Jerusalem stumbleth and Judah falleth, because their tongue and their works are contrary to the Lord, to offend His glorious eyes." They show us God also in the infinite fulness and boundless energy of the *compassionating love* which causes Him to be interested in the "wretched, the troubled and the comfortless;" they show us God in the energy of His faithfulness towards His Church, towards His beloved Zion, which He covers with his wings as do the birds, which He protects and saves, round about which He goes to watch and help, and on behalf of which, until He has finally created the new heavens and the new earth, He will again and again fulfil the words, "behold darkness covereth the earth, and thick darkness the peoples, but upon thee the Lord ariseth, and the glory of the Lord appeareth above thee."

THE SACRIFICES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

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THE most general and comprehensive term used in the Old Testament for sacrifice, is *Corban,* which means strictly "offering." It has the same force as the German word *Opfer,* and our *offering,* both which are derived from the Latin *offerre.* The verb from which *Corban* is derived, signifies "to present a gift," and is used of gifts which are not brought to God. How very general the idea of Corban is, may be understood from the fact that it is used not only of sacrifices proper, but of the sacred treasure which was formed by the voluntary gifts of the Children of Israel.

The foundation of the custom and necessity of sacrifice or offering is contained in the words, "appear not before me empty," (Exodus xxiii. 15,) or literally rendered, "my countenance shall not be beheld empty;" to which we find added at the subsequent repetition of the law in Deuteronomy, "every man according to the gift of his hand, according to the blessing which the Lord thy God hath given," (chap. xvi. 17.) Impiety says, "who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? Or what are we the better, if we call upon Him?" Godliness, on the contrary, is driven by an irresistible impulse to seek its origin and source, and knows that so certainly as man is created in the image of God, even so certainly may he not appear empty before his Creator: its feeling is, that man cannot refuse to bring back in loving devotion what God has bestowed, that he cannot refuse to make sacrifice, without denying the true dignity of his nature, and reducing himself to the level of the brute, which consumes the divine gifts in

stupid indifference, which can only receive, and not give. The prophets describe thoroughly *con amore*, how the beasts make their habitation in the once so proud and great cities of the world. As a righteous retribution, they took the place of the generations of men which had become brutalized, and refused any longer to sacrifice. The duty and impulse to make sacrifices or offerings, becomes stronger in proportion as God's prevenient gifts are greater. First under the new covenant can men experience the most complete joy in sacrifice, for now those words, "let us love Him for He hath first loved us," and that question, "this have I done for thee, what doest thou for me?" have acquired an entirely different, even their full, force.

Several writers on this subject have sought to show that the essential nature of sacrifice in general, is set before us in Leviticus xvii. 11, where the ground of the prohibition to eat blood is given in the words, "for the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to atone for your souls, for the blood atones for the soul," (not as some render the Hebrew, "atones *through* the soul.") They conclude from this passage that the blood, as being the most fitting and true means of atonement, is the very kernel and central point of the sacrifice. It is, however, evidently not the "key to the entire Mosaic idea of sacrifice," as has been said, but only to the significance of that part of sacrifice which consisted in the *shedding of blood*. If it could be proved that the shedding of blood is the root and fundamental feature of all sacrifice, the position would be tenable. But so far from this being the case, we find alongside of the bloody, also bloodless sacrifices. And even as regards the bloody sacrifices, the shedding of blood was the principal matter only in the case of sin-offerings and trespass-offerings: whereas in the case of burnt-offerings, as also of thank-offerings, it was quite a secondary and subordinate element. The characteristic feature of burnt offerings was decidedly *the burning*, as the symbolical expression of consecration, or devotion. The very name tells us this. The passage in question has therefore nothing whatever to do with the general idea of sacrifice or offering. It only throws light on the significance of one single feature in sacrifice. Alongside of the declaration that, "without shedding of

blood there is no forgiveness,"* (Hebrews ix. 22,) it places that other, "wherever, in the Church of the Lord, there is shedding of blood, there is also forgiveness, atonement." The false assertion, that atonement is the fundamental idea of Sacrifice in general, has created very much confusion.

The Scripture opposite of sacrifice is the *Ban*, curse, excommunication,—a fearful word. It is as certain as that God has created man in His own image, that He cannot stand in a relation of indifference towards him. In one way or in another His just claims on man must be met, either by the *sacrifice* which man cheerfully and lovingly offers, or by the *ban* with which His angry majesty visits those who refuse to sacrifice. Times in which the spirit of sacrifice has died out in the hearts of men, are always followed by those to which the words, "I come and smite the land with the curse," are justly applicable. The Scriptures commit partly to human hands the declaration and carrying out of the Ban. But in proportion as the spirit of sacrifice dies out, in that proportion also does the zeal to exercise the ban cool down. Then the Almighty Himself takes the sword in His hand, and that word finds confirmation,—"the Lord is angry at all the heathen, and fierce against all their host, He will drive them out, and deliver them over to slaughter."†

What is the relation between sacrifice and prayer? That there must be a close connection between the two, is evident from the fact that, as a general rule, in the First Book of Moses, where mention is made of the erection of an altar, there also we read of the calling on the name of God. Luther has somewhat inaccurately rendered the Hebrew, "preach of the name of the Lord:" although the translation conveys in the

* The great importance attached to the shedding of blood, in connection with sacrifices, is quite peculiar to Holy Scripture. It corresponds to the depth of the knowledge of sin, which is the privilege of the Church of God. A fundamental fault of the well known Essay by de Maistre, on Sacrifices, in the "Soirèes de St. Petersbourg," is his transference of the value attached to the blood by the Israelites, to the Heathens, who were destitute of that which it presupposes.

† The connection and contrast between Ban and Sacrifice are very plainly seen in Isaiah xxxiv. 5, 6, where the Ban is represented as a forced sacrifice, a sacrifice which God takes to Himself, or, for which He Himself takes those who refuse sacrifices. "The Lord hath a *slain sacrifice* in Bozrah."

main the right force of the words. For the public and solemn calling upon God, the presentation of thanks for the deeds by which He had created for Himself a name, was at the same time a "preaching of the name of the Lord." At all the great crises of their life, after every great divine deliverance and blessing, the patriarchs of our race instituted a specially solemn public worship of God, wherein they offered sacrifices and called upon the name of the Lord. Abraham, for example, did so on his arrival in Canaan, after the first manifestation of God there vouchsafed him; and also after his return from Egypt.

The close connection subsisting between sacrifice and prayer, is further evident from such passages as Hosea xiv. 2, where the prophet puts into the mouth of apostate Israel the words, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." Thanksgiving appears there as the soul of the thank-offerings. So also in Hebrews xiii. 15, "Let us then offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips which confess His name." Substantially, sacrifice is an embodied prayer. In accordance with the tendency to symbolism characteristic of ancient times, with the need so deeply felt by men in an age when fancy and the perceptions of sense were all prevailing, to see in an outward shape that which inwardly stirred their souls, prayer took to itself a body in sacrifice. This, however, does not exhaust its significance. Men desired, it is true, to see their inward feelings outwardly embodied and represented, but, at the same time, another impulse also was at work, namely, the wish to give a pledge for the reality and earnestness of what was inwardly experienced, and thus to secure themselves against self-deception. Samuel's parents, for example, wished to devote their son to the Lord. That was an inward act; but the prayer in which they presented him to the Lord did not fully satisfy the impulse of their heart. They felt compelled to give a proof of their sincerity by the presentation of a burnt-offering of three bullocks. Such a disposition to furnish a tangible pledge of sincerity dwells in us as well as in the men of Old Testament days, only the mode of expression is different. For example, when some great mercy has been vouchsafed to us, the mere offering of

thanks to God in prayer does not content us. We feel impelled to prove the sincerity of our thankfulness, by devoting to the Lord a portion of our substance. Such is the origin of very many charitable foundations. Finally, the sacrifices of the Old Testament economy had an objective as well as an internal, subjective aspect. Sin-offerings were not merely the embodied expression of man's need of atonement, but also themselves the divinely ordained means of atonement. In the case also of the other sacrifices, the blood served to atone for the soul. Thus we see that prayer runs parallel only with the inward side of sacrifices: their peculiar objective side found its fulfilment in Christ.

The saying of Lasaulx, that, "One may, perhaps, say, that the first word of the *original* man was a prayer, and the first action of *fallen* man a sacrifice," rests on a wrong view of the relation between sacrifice and prayer. Its foundation is the false conception of the essential nature of sacrifice, as consisting in atonement, expiation. This is undoubtedly an important element in the sacrifices of fallen man. Scarcely a sacrificial action was performed under the Old Covenant in which this aspect was not represented. But it did not constitute the very *essence* of the sacrifice. Burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, and meat-offerings, might have been brought by man even before the fall, as certainly as it was his duty to *devote* himself to God, to thank Him for His benefits, and to vow to walk in His ways. But the fall has modified no less the character of prayer than that of sacrifice. We need only consider the Psalms of David to be convinced that the fall has had the deepest influence on prayer. To its account must be set all that crying out of the depths, all such mournful expressions as, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who can stand?" and all such expressions of praise as, "Who forgiveth all thy sin, who healeth all thine iniquities."

What is the relation between the sacrifices of heathendom and those of the Old Testament? It is not our intention to deny that here and there heathendom was moved and stirred by nobler feelings; but yet, in general, the sacrifice of Cain may be adduced as typical of the sacrifices of the heathen, whilst those of the Old Testament find their type in that of Abel. The attempt has been vainly made to reduce the dif-

ferent results of the sacrifices of the two brothers back to a difference in the objects or matters offered. That the difference lay rather in the *disposition*, is distinctly intimated in the narrative itself. For instance, this is suggested by the circumstance, that the narrative begins with the *person* sacrificing, not with the *thing* sacrificed,—"The Lord looked graciously on *Abel* and his sacrifice; but on *Cain* and his sacrifice He did not look graciously." We are further led to the same point by the words of the Lord spoken to Cain, "If thou art pious, then art thou approved;" and also, by the saying in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that, "By *faith* Abel offered unto the Lord a better sacrifice than Cain." Abel's sacrifice was a *self-sacrifice*. In his offering, he presented to the Lord a heart full of faith, and love, and thankfulness. Cain's sacrifice, on the contrary, was a kind of commutation—it was based on a calculation of profit and loss—it was a selfish investment. His heart he kept back for himself and for sin; but he believed that he could make use of the Lord in his tilling of the soil, he considered it dangerous to be on bad terms with his God, and therefore, in the interest of his selfishness, the father of all soulless worship so far overcame his selfishness, as to offer to his Creator a small portion of the fruits of the earth by way of compensation. As with Cain, so also, for the most part, with the heathen, sacrifice is not a child-like form of the worship which is in spirit and in truth, but its very opposite. They sacrifice everything but themselves. In any case, however, heathendom is greatly to be preferred to modern unbelief, with its utter lack of the spirit of sacrifice. The heathen was, at any rate, penetrated by the conviction that higher powers rule this earthly life, although he never got further than the effort to come to terms of compromise with those powers. If things went well with him, his payments were scanty; if heavy misfortunes befel him, he decided on making greater sacrifices. In the Tonga Islands, when any one is sick, all the members of the family cut off a joint of the little finger as a sacrifice to their God; hence almost everybody's hands are found to be mutilated. In cases of dangerous sickness the family offers up a child.* Very

* Wuttke, "Geschichte des Heidenthums," Th. i. § 141.

little or no account is taken of the state of the heart and mind of the sacrificer in heathen sacrifices. One thing alone is kept in view, namely, that by the act itself, "honour is shown to the gods, their power is recognized, and man's feeling of dependence is expressed in an action."* Beyond this stage heathendom is incapable of passing. Ere other sacrifices could be claimed, the gods themselves must undergo a change. They must no longer be distinct persons with peculiar personal interests, but the living personal idea of the righteous and the good. The gods of the heathen are not *upright*, as that word is used in Scripture, that is, they are not what they should be,—they are not the living moral order of the world, and cannot therefore lay the claim, "O son, give me thy heart,"—a claim which has no meaning or force, save as coming from the true God. Such gods must content themselves with a calculated commutation, beyond which their servants will never go, especially as they themselves never do any deeds of love, by which love might be enkindled in return.

The sacrifices of Holy Scripture have an entirely different character. The God of Scripture, is from the very commencement, Jehovah, that is, true, simple, and absolute Being, the original Ground of all things, the One in whom we live and move and have our being. God being such, it necessarily follows that man, who alone, of all creation, is formed in the divine image, cannot worship Him truly, save in spirit. All the sacrifices instituted and approved by the Holy Scriptures are self-sacrifices. The nature and purport of the sacrifices of animals are transparently clear. Under the image of an animal, man himself is offered. The favourers of the commutation view of sacrifice, which their heathen neighbours constantly sought to import amongst the Israelites, are presented, at the very threshold of revelation, with their father, the reprobate Cain. Abraham received the command to offer up his son,—the son to whom his whole heart clung. Not oxen and sheep for their own sake—such was the lesson loudly taught him by this occurrence—does God desire, but the heart of man in the oxen and sheep. All the sacrifices of

* Nägelsbach, "Homerische Theologie," § 304.

animals were intended to be sacrifices of men. "I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours" (Leviticus xxvi. 31), said God, through Moses, to all the ungodly, who mean to put him off with their sacrifices of beasts. "Dost thou think," says the prophet (Micah vi. 7, 8), "that the Lord hath pleasure in many thousands of rams, or in ten thousands of rivers of oil? or shall I give my first-born son for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? It hath been declared to thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee, namely, to keep God's word, to exercise love, and to be humble before thy God." That is the only sacrifice which is worthy of God and of man; and the sacrifice of an animal, where this soul is lacking, is an abomination before the Lord. "I will praise the name of God in song," says the Psalmist (Psalm lxix. 31, 32), "and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than oxen or bullocks with horns and hoofs." The predicates here given to the bullocks exhibit to us the true nature of animals, and teach us that such a merely material sacrifice cannot possibly, considered in itself, be an object of pleasure to God who is spirit. With the merely external sacrifices, which are not required by the law, but are a bad caricature, the work of the natural man, the fortieth Psalm contrasts *obedience*, the cheerful observance of the divine commands, and the praise which proceeds from a heart full of thankfulness: "Slain-offerings and meat-offerings please thee not: thou desirest neither burnt-offerings nor sin-offerings. Then said I, *lo I come*." So also in Psalm l., the true and proper aim of which was to instruct the people of God in the nature of the sacrifices required by the divine law, and to meet the dangers which are always attendant on the outward embodiment of religious feelings, merely external sacrifices are rejected: "Sacrifice unto God praise, and *thus* pay thy vows to the Most High." Vows consisted, for the most part, of thank-offerings. Only he who brought the *substance* of such vows, that is, thanks, could be said really to have paid his vows.

The choice of animals for sacrifice directly depended on the view taken by the Old Testament of the essential nature of sacrifice. According to Leviticus i. 2, sacrifices must be taken from the cattle. If the universal character of sacrifices is to

be vicarious, if in them man offers himself, then must he of necessity, to use de Maistre's expression, choose the *most human* offerings, that is, he must select those animals which are most nearly connected with men; and of these again, such as are the most meek, innocent, pure, and valuable. Within the sacred confines of Scripture it was impossible that such a sacrifice should be thought of, as that of the Roman Emperors, who not unfrequently slaughtered, for their hecatombs, a hundred lions and as many eagles. As a matter of course, also, swine and dogs were excluded. According to Leviticus i. 14-17, birds were not allowed to be brought as burnt-offerings instead of beasts, except in cases of poverty: and then only such birds as turtle doves, which were tame and might be considered as belonging to the household.

As regards the *classification* of sacrifices, they may be divided into those whose end is the re-establishment of the state of grace; and those which were offered by him who was in the state of grace. The first class consists of sin-offerings and trespass-offerings: the second, of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, to which may be added the bloodless offerings.

Sin-offerings owed their origin to the time of Moses. In the Book of Genesis we find only burnt-offerings and slain-offerings. The ground of this difference lies in the childlike character of the Patriarchal Age. Then, the consciousness of sin was not fully developed. Sin-offerings were as yet included and involved in burnt-offerings. Even in the time of Moses these latter still bore some reference to the consciousness of guilt. Indeed when the entire man devoted himself to God in them, the fact of sin could not be left out of sight. Now, however, the consciousness of sin had become so strong, that it called for special expression and embodiment. The institution of special sin-offerings was intimately connected with the giving of the law. Without the law sin was dead. But sin took occasion by the commandment and stirred all kinds of desire. Through the law came the knowledge of sin. The institution of sin-offerings prevented this deeper knowledge of sin from leading to despair, and impelled men to unite themselves so much the more closely, to God who is merciful, gracious, full of great kindness, and rich in forgiveness. They represent therefore a progressive step in the development of

the people of God. There is only much love, where much has been forgiven.

In investigating more closely the import and force of the Mosaic sin-offering, the inquiry which first presents itself is—"Whether, and in what sense, it was *vicarious* or substitutionary?" The theology of the Church has in all ages assumed that sacrifices bore a substitutionary character. Where it has been denied, traces may invariably be detected of some sort of a bias, leading to the denial. From the laying on of the hands of the sacrificer, to which some have attached great importance, when considered by itself, no proof of the vicarious nature of the sin-offering can be drawn. Indeed, the circumstance that the same form was observed in all sacrifices, shows that, in general, its only design was to indicate the *rapport* existing between the man sacrificing and the thing sacrificed. From the nature of any particular sacrifice in question, we must form our judgment as to the more precise import of this act. The laying on of hands in the case of sin-offerings did not in itself mark them as vicarious, but because their vicarious character was established on other grounds. Amongst these grounds the first place is taken by the *name* of the sin-offering. It was termed חטאת, "Sin." This sacrifice was accordingly looked upon as the embodiment of sin. That there was such a transference, is further confirmed by the fact that the expression, elsewhere so common, "for the good pleasure of the Lord," was never employed in connection with the sin-offering. It is of significance, too, that the flesh of the sin-offering, in cases where the blood thereof did *not* come into the Holy Place, was eaten by the priests; and that when the blood did come into the Holy Place, as in the case of sin-offerings which were brought to make atonement for the whole people, the priests included, the flesh was *burnt* outside the Holy Place and the Camp. Both these considerations lead us to conclude that the impurity of the sinner passed over to the sacrifice, and was, as it were, absorbed by it; which, of course, by no means prevented its being, in another aspect, most sacred or holy. For the impurity attributed to the sacrifice is essentially different from that of the sinner. The eating of the flesh of the sacrifice by the priest was one of the rites of divine service. It rested on the supposition that the impurity

of the sinner had, as it were, passed over to the sacrifice, and on the idea, that in order to its complete removal, there was a necessity for its being brought into a closer relation to the priesthood instituted by God. Through this closer relation the impurity was represented as consumed by the holiness with which the order of the priesthood was endowed, and the time was thus pointed to, when sacrifice and priest should be united in one person, when Christ should be, as St. Paulinus says, "the sacrifice of His Priesthood, and the Priest of His sacrifice," (victima sacerdotii sui et sacerdos suæ victimæ.) This view of the act we meet with in Leviticus x. 17, where Moses says to Aaron, "wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and it is given to *you* to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?" Evidence to the same effect also is furnished by the circumstance, that it was ordained that those sin-offerings in which the priests themselves were interested, and in connection with which consequently they could not take up a vicarious position, should be burnt outside the camp. Removal out of the camp, which was an image of the Church, is always in the Mosaic law a sign of impurity. That outside the camp it was obligatory to choose a *clean place*, was in order to do justice to the other aspect of the sacrifice. Imputed sin can never stand quite on the same footing with indwelling sin. Lastly, in favour of the imputation of the sin of the offerer to the offering, we may refer to the relation existing between the Old Testament sacrifice and the death of Christ. If it is certain that Christ's death was vicarious, and that this its character is clearly set forth even in the Old Testament (see Isaiah liii.), we cannot deny the same character to the sacrifices without destroying the connection of type and antitype.

Sin-offerings were therefore vicarious, substitutionary: but how are we to conceive of this substitution? It is clear enough that, *in themselves*, the sacrifices were not in the least fitted to effect that which they were instituted to effect; "for it is impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sin" (Hebrews x. 4). For the blood of the guilty, the ransom must be the blood of an innocent, sinless, righteous, holy one. An animal sacrifice may, undoubtedly, by its ex-

ternal faultlessness, *typify* moral faultlessness, but in itself it has not the remotest connection with the sphere in which the opposed forces of sin and holiness are realities. Moreover, for sin, which has its roots in freedom, the only true substitution is a *voluntary* one: animal sacrifices, on the contrary, are compulsory, involuntary. Lastly, too, there ought to be a real connection and congruity between that which performs the vicarious office and him for whom the office is performed. Now, there is no such connection whatever between a man and an animal. We are distinctly enough taught, that sin-offerings were not of necessity, and inherently vicarious, by the fact, that under certain circumstances something else might supply their place; which could not have been thought of if the blood had had in itself an atoning force. According to Leviticus v. 11-13, a poor man was allowed to bring flour instead of the bloody sin-offering, and it served precisely the same purpose as the animal sacrifice. From this we must judge, that the sacrifice of an animal was accepted by God as an atonement for sin, only because of some rite which gave the act a meaning it did not possess in itself. This could only be the reference to the true sin-offering, foreshadowed by these typical sufferings. Only by degrees, and imperfectly, did the Old Testament unveil the *true* sin-offering before the eyes of believers. Two purposes were in the first instance to be served by sacrifice. The *first* was to sharpen the eye for the discernment of the abominableness and damnableness of sin. Every one who presented a sin-offering confessed, by the very act, that he had deserved *death* by his sin, and thus contradicted, most strongly and glaringly, that view of sin as a bagatelle, as a peccadillo, as a trifling thing, to which the natural man is so strongly inclined, and which the Mosaic law constantly and industriously aimed to uproot. Sin-offerings served to make remembrance of sins (Hebrews x. 3). The second purpose served by sin-offerings was to naturalize the idea of substitution in the Church or Congregation of God. "The idea," says Hirscher, in his "Moral," "carried out in the Mosaic Cultus, that no guilt can be left as it is, that none is simply, and without further ado, forgiven, but requires in every case a fixed and definite atonement, is a very remarkable one." By such means, not only was the people of God accustomed to regard sin as a

most serious thing, and prevented from frivolously forgetting it, but also the soil was prepared in its midst for the reception of the true mediation, so soon as, in the course of history, it had been accomplished. The hearts of Jews beat in anticipation thereof. "Moses," said our Lord, "wrote of Me: referring not merely to the direct Messianic proclamations contained in the books of Moses, but still more to that which the law prescribed in respect of sin-offerings. He, of course, in Old Testament times, who was not satisfied with a simple faith in the Divine promise, that "this blood shall atone for your souls;" who marked more narrowly the essential insufficiency of the means of atonement, which stood in the foreground, must necessarily, so long as the background remained unillumined, fall into sharp conflicts. It cannot be denied that in this respect the believers in the Old Testament were much less favoured than we: they were in every respect much more completely shut up to blind faith. But, notwithstanding, even in the Old Testament, support and substance were given to their presentiments of that true Mediator, who lay concealed behind the typical offerings, by Divine utterances, such as those contained in the 53d chapter of Isaiah,—a chapter which, in the truest sense, forms the bridge between the typical and antitypical sin-offering. How deeply impressed on the minds was that prophecy concerning the servant of God, who should give his life a sacrifice for sin, who should bear our sickness, and carry our sorrows, who should be wounded for our transgression, and bruised for our iniquities, on whom the chastisement of our peace would lie, and by whose wounds we should be healed, is clear from the fact, that the idea of the Messiah as the true sin-offering, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, may be found in a fully developed shape in the nobler forms of later Judaism.

The question that next arises is,—*For what sins were sin-offerings presented?* Numbers xv. 27-31 affords us a firm foundation for the answering of this question. In this passage, which is the basis of the New Testament doctrine of the sin against the Holy Ghost, a distinction is drawn between sins of weakness and such sins as are committed with a high hand; that is, openly, freely, boldly. These latter sins are described in the words, "Because he hath blasphemed the

Lord, hath despised the word of the Lord, and set at nought His commands." By way of illustration, mention is made immediately afterwards of the case of the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath, not from necessity, but really and truly in order to set God at defiance, and to make a mock of His holy ordinances. Sins of weakness are those for which the Psalmist prays to be forgiven, when he says, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults," making allusion to the desperate and masterly cunning which enables sin to creep in unperceived, to disguise itself, to put on the appearance of good, and to entangle men in its snares, despite their most honest endeavours to escape. The petition which follows immediately after, on the contrary,—"Preserve thy servant from the proud; let them not have dominion over me,"—refers to sinning with a high hand. Wilful sins are here personified as proud tyrants, who would be only too glad to bring the servant of God once again under their command. In the Lord's Prayer, the petition, "forgive us our sins," refers to sins of weakness: wilful sins, on the contrary, are the object of the petition, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil," from the Devil, who is ever seeking to seduce us into lifting ourselves up with a high hand against the Lord of our life.

According to the declaration of Moses just quoted from the Book of Numbers, sins of weakness can be atoned for by sacrifices, and *must* be thus atoned for, if they are to be forgiven. Intentional sins, on the contrary, cannot be expiated by sacrifices: they are punished with destruction—"he that despiseth the word of the Lord, that soul shall be utterly cut off." This accords perfectly with what is said by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews,—"for if we sin *wilfully* after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." The general principle, therefore, of the Old Testament is, that the sphere of the sin-offering is exactly coextensive with that of forgiveness. Practically, however, there was a difference between the two—in deciding which were sins of weakness, and which sins of purpose, the law was obliged to confine itself to the objective matter of fact, because of the shortsightedness of those who were called to administrate it. Hence it came to pass, that in practice the sphere

of forgiveness was *wider* than that of sin-offerings. Take for example David's sin with Bathsheba. Frightful though it was, it must still be characterised as, in the main, a sin of weakness, when we take all the circumstances of the case into consideration. As such it did not involve total apostacy, though its hardening influence might, nay must, have brought about such a result by degrees, had not mercy intervened. The law, with its fixed objective standard, was obliged to reckon David's adultery amongst the sins of intention: consequently, although he himself obtained forgiveness, no sin-offering could be presented on behalf of his sin. Sin-offerings appertained only to those sins which were not appointed to be punished with utter destruction. This difference in practice, did not, however, at all affect the principle. As far as that is concerned, forgiveness and sacrifice are inseparably connected, not only under the Old, but also still under the New Covenant.

Kurtz, in his work on the Mosaic Sacrifices, has wrongly put "unintentional sins, sins of ignorance," in the place of, "sins of weakness." He also erroneously maintains that sin-offerings availed only for individual sins, for single definite transgressions, not for sinfulness in general. That sin-offerings might be brought by every one who carried about with him, at all, a consciousness of sin, who felt himself troubled, his heart burdened, by sin, is evident, firstly, from the fact that such sacrifices were presented for the *entire* congregation at large; but, especially, from the existence of the great day of atonement, on which, once every year, atonement was made for the holy place, by means of a sin-offering, "from the impurity of the children of Israel, and from their transgression in all their sins," (Leviticus xvi. 16), and concerning which day, we read in verse 30, "On this day, shall atonement be made for you, that ye may be cleansed from all your sins before the Lord." Sin-offerings usually originated in, and were suggested by, sufferings, which were always regarded as a punishment from God, and as therefore containing a summons to men to propitiate the divine wrath. At this same time they did not consider the sufferings to be a visitation of this or that particular offence, but an indictment of corrupt human nature in general, and of its manifold productions, whatever they might be. "My sins have laid hold upon me," says the

Psalmist, "they are more than the hairs of mine head," (Psalm xl. 13). Bähr's assertion, (see his "Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus,") that sin-offerings related only to the transgressions of the ceremonial law, gives a totally erroneous impression. It is as much as to say, that under the Old Covenant there was no *forgiveness* except for such transgressions; for the sphere of forgiveness is co-extensive with that of sacrifice. Such a separation between the moral and the ceremonial law was quite foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament: and it can only be upheld with any appearance of truth by those who utterly misconceive the symbolical character of the ceremonial law. Besides, we may adduce against such an assertion, the clearest cases—such, for example, as those in Leviticus v., where we are given to understand that sin-offerings must be brought for injuries done to the property of the Lord, or of one's neighbour.

Among the rites observed in connection with sin-offerings, sprinkling with blood occupies a particularly prominent place. It was a symbolical representation of the reconciliation effected by the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice. This symbolical sprinkling, which was first truly realised and fulfilled in that sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter i. 1, 2; Hebrews xii. 24), which, according to the proclamation of Isaiah (chap. lii. 15), should sprinkle many Gentiles, occurred also in connection with other sacrifices, because they also had a propitiatory significance. In these instances, however, the propitiatory aspect not being the principal one, the sprinkling of blood was a thing of minor importance. Whereas, in this latter case, the blood was only sprinkled round about on the altar of burnt-offering; in the first mentioned case the *horns* of the altar, in which the entire significance of the altar culminated, were specially sprinkled: and the horns were, in a manner, the *head* of the altar. In many instances, the blood was brought into the holy place itself, and was sprinkled on the horns of the altar of incense, against the vail of the ark of the covenant, or even directly on the ark of the covenant itself in the holy of holies. Then the act was repeated seven times.

According to Leviticus v. 11, sin-offerings were never allowed to be conjoined with meat-offerings. These latter

were always brought in connection with burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. The reason lies on the very surface, when we consider the purport of the meat-offerings. They symbolize good works; and good works presuppose not only the finished propitiation, but also that consecration of the whole person signified by the burnt-offerings. Good works can only be performed by him who is justified, and who is in the state of sanctification. It is entirely a fancy of the corrupt reason of the natural man, that a beginning may at once be made with meat-offering. To such foolish dreams of virtue the gravest opposition is presented by the word of God. "Can a man gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruits." "He shall put no oil thereon, neither any frankincense, for it is a sin-offering," we read further in Leviticus v. 11. *Why no oil*, we learn from Psalm li. 13, where David, after his grievous fall into sin, prays, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," for he knew to his sorrow that the Holy Spirit of God, whom he had greatly grieved, had already almost utterly departed from him. In the symbolical language of Scripture oil constantly stands for Spirit. We are called Christians, Anointed, as those who are in the Spirit. Sin and Spirit are mutually exclusive of each other. Before the Spirit can enter, sin must be destroyed by the blood of atonement. The spirit which can co-exist with sin, is not the Holy Spirit—it is the spirit of the world, the spirit from the abyss, which in this generation carries on its work in the children of unbelief, in the brethren of the free spirit. *Why no frankincense*, we are taught by John, when he says, "We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man feareth God and doeth his will, him He heareth," (John ix. 31). Incense is everywhere the symbol of prayer. The sinner cannot pray, before the hands stained with blood and the fingers with faults, are cleansed in the living water of forgiveness: which forgiveness is only possible on the ground of an atonement by blood, (Isaiah i. 15; lix. 2, 3).

In conjunction with sin-offerings the law makes mention also of *trespass-offerings*. These, however, occupy only a subordinate position, and are only prescribed for a limited number of cases. The word employed to designate this species of sacrifice, means strictly, "restitution," "recompence."

It is used in Numbers v. 5 ff, of that which any one may have unrighteously taken away from another, and which he is under obligation to replace, to restore. The sinner ought to be animated not only by the desire to obtain forgiveness from God, through the expiation of his sin—a desire which was met and satisfied by sin-offerings—but also by the hearty wish, as far as possible, to *make amends* for his offence. This latter wish is the universal sign of true and genuine sorrow and repentance. So far as the sin relates to God,—and the *sacrifice* has to do with it only so far as it does concern God,—so far is it impossible for this wish to find *real* satisfaction. Still, a symbolical representation was assigned it in the Mosaic Cultus, for the purpose of stirring up drowsy consciences, and of giving calm to anxious ones, which lay hold specially on such a point as this. The sin was submitted to a valuation, and by means of the sacrifice, a compensation or recompence was brought, having ideally the same worth as the robbery which had been committed on God:—and, be it observed, every sin, even those sins which are primarily committed against our neighbour, (Psalm li. 6), is in one aspect a robbery of God. But as the object was principally to give outward representation to an idea, to naturalize in the Church the view of sin as a robbery of God, the trespass-offering and the recompence-offering were expressly prescribed only for a limited number of cases—such, namely, as specially awakened the desire to offer a compensation. Of this nature were actual breaches of trust in connection with the property of the Lord or of a fellow-man. Then, the inevitable influence of the material recompence prescribed along with the sacrifice, was to give special liveliness to the wish to come to terms with God even in the higher aspect. Trespass-offerings were, however, not confined to these cases: free play was rather allowed to the troubled conscience in other circumstances of this nature. The limits of the command were not coincident with those of permission.

The sin-offerings brought by individuals through the entire year, according to their needs, and for the easing of the burdened conscience, may be grouped around two central points; namely, around the two festivals celebrated by the Church at large every year. One of these was the great day of atonement, on which the High Priest went, once a year, into the

Holy of Holies, not without blood, which he offered, first for himself, and then for the ignorance of the people (Hebrews ix. 7), namely, for that great mass of unrecognised sins, whose forgiveness had not been realized by the presentation of special sin-offerings. This great day of atonement corresponds pretty nearly to the day of penitence, observed in the Lutheran Church. The true root of all presentations of sin-offerings was the Passover, to which in the main, the Good Friday of the Church of the New Covenant corresponds. That the Passover was a sin-offering is evident, even from the name. The word signifies strictly, "deliverance,"* and then "sacrifice of deliverance," or "sacrifice of atonement." But we learn the character of the Passover as a sin-offering still more clearly from the account of its first institution. When it was appointed that all the first-born in the land of Egypt should die, the destroying angel—that is, the angel of the Lord, in His revenging and punishing character—spared all those houses which he found sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb, in sign of the expiation of sin effected by it. He who had this token might be sure of being spared and delivered (Exodus xii. 23). His sins were laid, as it were, on the lamb, the type of innocence. He who slaughtered the lamb confessed, in a symbolical language, that he also, no less than the Egyptians, the children of this world, had deserved to be an object of the Divine wrath:—he declared that he could not claim deliverance on the ground of his own worth, or of any other title, but that he expected it from the grace of God alone. According to the Divine promise, to accept the blood of the innocent lamb in place of the blood of the sinner, who recognised and felt himself to be such, those who made this confession received the remission of the punishment of their sins. The principle was thus laid down for all ages of the Church, that that which distinguishes the Church from the world is the blood of atonement. Nor was the festival of Passover, as celebrated in later times, a mere commemorative festival, as is clear from the continual slaughter of lambs for sacrifices. Wherever there is a sacrifice instituted by God, we may be

* The verb signified originally "to loosen" (so, in the Arabic, from which is derived, the Hebrew word פסח, "one who limps," or strictly, "one who is unloosed untied"), then "to deliver."

certain that, provided it is brought in faith, there is a repetition of the first benefit, which is distinguished from the subsequent ones only by its forming the commencement of a long series. The paschal lamb was the basis and root of the entire system of sacrifices: only as connected with it had the remaining sin-offerings value and significance; without it they were but as disjointed members. It was the true and proper covenant-sacrifice—the sacrifice which represented in its highest form the distinction between the world, without God, and the people of God, reconciled unto God.

What distinguished the paschal sacrifice from all other sin-offerings was, that a *communion* was connected with it—that the lamb was not merely a sacrifice, but at the same time also a sacrament. This is the explanation of the unimportant differences between it and the sacrifices of atonement, especially of the peculiarity that it was not entirely burnt, but eaten,—a circumstance which has frequently been adduced to show that it belonged to the class of peace-offerings, with which also a communion was connected. With these, however, the paschal sacrifice has, strictly considered, nothing in common. It is impossible that an internal connection should be supposed to exist between them, except as the result of adopting the utterly false notion, that the paschal sacrifice had reference to the leading of the children of Israel out of Egypt: whereas it referred solely to the sparing of Israel's first-born in the judgment with which the first-born in Egypt was visited. The only resemblance between the paschal lamb and the peace-offerings is one of form:—for this reason it is never designated by the characteristic name of this latter class of sacrifices, it is never styled a peace-offering. It might be included among the *slain-sacrifices* (Exodus xii. 27, xxiii. 18), without denying its essential agreement with sin-offerings. This name relates merely to the *form* of the peace-offerings, to the circumstance, namely, that those who presented them received a portion of them. This was a feature common to them with the paschal lamb.

The significance of the Passover as a sacrament, as a type of the Eucharist, is rooted in the fact, that it was *eaten* by those on whose behalf it was offered as a sacrifice. The presentation thereof as a sacrifice symbolized the atonement

accomplished by the substitution; and so the eating of the lamb signified the inward living appropriation of the atonement, its becoming, as it were, a part of the flesh and blood. Through the sacrifice the blessings were *gained*, through the eating they were *received*. "The sacrament is a gift bestowed on us by God: a sacrifice, on the contrary, is a gift which we bring to God. The former descends from God to us: the latter rises from us to God."

It is a characteristic fact, that never more than one single animal could be presented as a sin-offering. This shows that the objective element was the predominant one in connection therewith—that such offerings were mainly regarded as the means of atonement instituted by God. In the case of sacrifices of a predominantly inward subjective character, it was left to the will and pleasure of him who offered the sacrifice, how many animals he brought. No limits were set to the inward impulse. Every presentation of a sin-offering was obliged to be preceded by an open confession of the sin which was to be expiated (Leviticus v. 5, Numbers v. 7). For *dumb* sinners there was no atonement and no forgiveness:—as David says, "I said I will confess my transgression to the Lord. Then forgavest Thou me the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm xxxii. 5).

How are the sin-offerings of the Old Testament related to the Church of the New Covenant? What verification do the long and detailed directions concerning them give of the saying of St. Paul, that "all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?"

We have already remarked, that all the sin-offerings of the Old Testament point to and typify Christ, the true sin-offering, and that what is prescribed by the Old Testament in reference to the sin-offering was first fulfilled in Christ; and so long as this relation between the two is unrecognised, so long must sin-offerings be regarded as a mere Jewish antiquity. The New Testament calls attention repeatedly, and very distinctly, to this connection. John the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming to him, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). The Saviour Himself says, that He gives His life a ransom for many (Matthew

xx. 28). Alluding to Himself as the true paschal lamb, He spoke of His body which He should give for us, of His blood which should be shed for us, for the forgiveness of sins. St. Peter describes Christ as the reality foreshadowed by the Old Testament sin-offerings, and especially by the paschal lamb, when he says that we are bought with the precious blood of Christ, as of an innocent and spotless lamb. To the lamb which was slain John directs our attention ever afresh in his Apocalypse. St. Paul says, in 1 Corinthians v. 7, "We also have a paschal lamb, which is Christ sacrificed for us." But the proper New Testament key to the understanding of sin-offerings is the epistle to the Hebrews, which, especially in chap. x., describes to us the excellence of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord, as the fulfilment and completion of all Old Testament sacrifices.

Not only, however, by words does the New Testament testify to the connection between Old Testament sin-offerings and the death of Christ, but also by facts. When the Saviour describes it as a matter of thorough necessity, that precisely at the Passover He should give up His life a ransom for many; that He should make his entrance into Jerusalem on the very same day on which the law of Moses appointed that the paschal lamb should be selected and separated; that He should institute the Eucharist at the time when the paschal lamb was eaten—He declares in reality, though not in form, not only that there is an essential connection in general between Himself and the paschal lamb, around which, as a centre, were grouped all the other Old Testament sin-offerings, but also that a knowledge of this relation is of great consequence, and ought to be the possession of his Church.

Regarding all that is written concerning the sin-offerings of the Old Testament in this light, we shall be in a high degree affected and benefited thereby. We shall be penetrated by a conviction that sin may not be treated lightly; we shall feel that we cannot help ourselves* to the forgiveness of sins as we like; that, according to God's eternal order, there is no forgiveness without blood; that it is a crime to think of pre-

* Harms' twenty-first Thesis runs as follows:—"The forgiveness of sin did cost money in the sixteenth century; but in the nineteenth one gets it for nothing, for one may help oneself to it."

senting ourselves before the holy God and His strict judgment-seat with other pretended offerings; that the blood of atonement is the real mark of distinction between the world and the people of God; and finally, that all separations from the world which are not rooted in this blood of atonement, must come to a miserable end. A consideration of the Old Testament sin-offering will force us nearer and nearer to Christ and His cross, and bring us into more intimate union with Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins with His own blood.

Substantially we present our New Testament sin-offering when we sing, in the public worship of God, the praises of the spotless Lamb of God, slain for our redemption. But it were to be desired that the idea of sacrifice should be more distinctly expressed in our Cultus than it is. Christ has, it is true, "by His one offering, perfected for ever them who are sanctified" (Hebrews x. 14). "He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by His sacrifice" (Hebrews ix. 26). The Romish sacrifice of the mass, even on the view of it given by Veith (see his work, "Ueber das Messopfer"), as "an imitative representation of the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross," does not meet the want. It is open to suspicion, both as leading to a confusion of the two states of Christ, namely, of the state of humiliation and of that of exaltation, and as too easily giving occasion and support to views which clash with the complete sufficiency of Christ's one sacrifice on the cross. Our presentation of that one sacrifice of Christ to God is an entirely different thing. It were to be desired that before the celebration of the Eucharist, by means of which we *appropriate* this sacrifice to ourselves, some rite should be performed in which we *present* the sacrifice to the angry majesty of God,—a rite, solemnly representing and symbolically embodying that watchword of our Church—"the blood and righteousness of Christ, they are my adornment and robe of honour,"—a rite through which every Sunday the burdened heart might solemnly cast its load of guilt and sin on Him who bore our weaknesses and carried our sorrows. We want, in short, the sacrifice of the mass in an Evangelical sense and spirit. Such a rite would truly become a Church which has chosen for its device the words,

"By faith alone;" a device meaning, of course, nothing else than "By the blood of Christ alone." For faith, in the sense of the Lutheran Church, is not that airy thing which it is now often represented to be,—it is no hollow, empty excitement or enthusiasm. We look upon faith as the begging hand by which we lay hold on the merits of Christ, by which, kneeling under His cross, we grasp the feet of Christ, and say—

> "Jesus, full of all compassion,
> Hear thy humble suppliant's cry,
> Let me know thy great salvation,
> See I languish, faint, and die:
> Guilty, but with heart relenting,
> Overwhelmed with helpless grief,
> Prostrate at thy feet repenting,
> Send, oh! send me quick relief."

The sin-offering is the beginning of all true religion, but it is not its end. There follow the sacrifices which, under the Old Covenant, were offered by those who were in a state of grace, and which ought still to be offered spiritually by the same class.

Among these sacrifices, *burnt-offerings* take the first place. Where various sacrifices are mentioned together, the sin-offering always precedes the burnt-offering, and this latter the thank-offering. In Romans xii. 1, the first of all the claims made on those who are justified by the blood of Christ, is that they present their bodies as burnt-sacrifices. What the characteristic element in the burnt-offering was, we learn from the names given to it. It was called, for example, "Olah," that is, "that which ascends," that which rises up in the fire to the Lord, thus being a symbol of the elevation of the heart to the living God. It was also called "Kalil," signifying "the whole," or, "a perfect sacrifice," because of the entire and complete burning, in contrast to the merely partial burning of individual parts of other sacrifices—specially of the slain-sacrifices. The lesson conveyed by the total burning was, that the elevation and surrender of the heart, symbolised by the burnt-offering, ought to be entire and unconditional, that no man can serve two masters, that God demands the whole heart, yea, the whole man, both body and soul.

According to these names, which are connected together in Psalm li. 21, entire and complete combustion is quite as characteristic of burnt-sacrifices, as the sprinkling of the blood is of sin-offerings. The lesson of burnt-offerings was, that he who is justified should henceforth live, not to himself, but to the Lord as His faithful servant. With this meaning accords the important position occupied by them. As expressive of the disposition which ought constantly to live and move in the congregation of the "servants of the Lord," burnt-offerings were repeated at every act of worship: no one could appear without a burnt-offering. Every other sacrifice was accompanied by a burnt-offering; it followed the sin-offering, and preceded the peace-offering.

Burnt-offerings also had an expiatory significance. This is expressly affirmed in Leviticus i. 4, 5, as also in Leviticus xiv. 20. It is clear also from Leviticus xvii. 11, where an atoning import is ascribed to all the blood that is brought to the altar. It is further evident, from the circumstance that, in the age of the patriarchs, burnt-offerings still occupied the position subsequently assigned to the sin-offering instituted by Moses. Nothing is more closely present to the mind of him who devotes himself to God than the thought of his own sinfulness—yea, even when he has just received the atonement and forgiveness of his sin; for sin ever cleaves unto him. Now this thought was met and quieted by the expiatory element contained in the burnt-offering, in the case of such as were already conscious of it; and the same element tended, at the same time, to stir up the thought in the minds of those to whom it had hitherto been strange. Those, however, who assert that burnt-offerings have predominantly the same import as sin-offerings, entirely overlook the clear line of separation between the two, and thus prevent the attainment of any deeper insight into the nature of the former. The expiatory element in burnt-offerings was a thoroughly subordinate one, as is evident both from its being so rarely and incidentally mentioned, and from the fact that the sprinkling of blood was by no means a marked and emphatic act, as in the case of sin-offerings. It was done in the most general possible way: the blood was merely sprinkled round about the altar.

In order to our understanding the burnt-offering more thoroughly, let us follow its course through history.

After the flood, which swallowed up all the living things on earth, Noah built an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings thereon. And the Lord smelled the sweet savour, and said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. In his burnt-offerings, Noah offered himself for a new obedience on the renewed earth. The Lord saw in him the Church, which, by the calling of Abraham, was about to receive new and solid foundations. By the burnt-offering of devotion, which the Church presents to Him, the earth is to be secured against new judgments of universal destruction. Here we learn the nature of true patriotism. The same means of defence which keep back a universal judgment, must also keep back particular judgments. The best union for the salvation and protection of one's country, is a union for the offering of burnt-offerings, a union for the surrender to God of our whole body and soul. Our patriotism should be measured by our devotion to that Lord who declared, and not without meaning it, that he would not destroy Sodom, even though there were only ten righteous men found in it.

According to Genesis xxii. 2, Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac for a burnt-offering. In demanding Isaac, God demanded Abraham himself, for the father's heart clung to the son of his old age. The false view he took of the divine command gave occasion to his truly accomplishing the spiritual sacrifice intended by God: and so soon as this took place, means were taken to prevent the consequences which would have followed from his misunderstanding. But the command given to the father of the faithful, is still addressed to all believers. To each one God says, by means of this fact: "Bring thine Isaac, keep nothing back, give up everything to me."

In the midst of burnt-offerings, was the covenant concluded which the Lord made with Israel on Sinai. Exodus xxiv. 2, furnishes the explanation—"And all the people answered with one voice and said, all the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." On the ground of this readiness to make a complete surrender of themselves which is here represented as the

characteristic mark of the people of God, they were purified from their sins of weakness by the blood of the burnt-offerings, whose atoning efficacy is brought to view in the passage in question (compare also Hebrews ix. 21). Then in the peace-offerings they presented thanks for the grace of the covenant vouchsafed to them.

According to Numbers vi. the fire must burn on the altar and never be extinguished. Constantly, also, must the burnt-offering burn on the altar: the burnt-offering of the evening till the morning, that of the morning till the evening. In this way the congregation was continually reminded that by nature and destiny it was bound to be utterly devoted to the service of the Lord, to wait ever on His will.

It was not an unimportant matter that the eternal fire on the altar which consumed the burnt-offerings had an heavenly origin. According to Numbers ix. 24, it fell from heaven at the offering of the first sacrifice. It had a symbolical meaning, it was an image of the divine nature. The Books of Moses themselves give us the explanation of the symbol. We read, for example, in Deuteronomy iv. 24, (compare Deut. ix. 3; Hebrews xii. 29), "the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, a *jealous* God." Fire, therefore, is a designation of God, as that living energy which is unable to tolerate anything alongside of and as a rival of itself. To those who offer themselves for burnt-offerings, the fire of divine energy is a fire of love: as it has been said, "would God that the glow of thy love might slay my dead works." To those, on the contrary, who refuse burnt-offerings, the fire of divine energy is a fire of anger. We read in Isaiah xxxiii. 14, that when the divine judgments were breaking in upon Jerusalem, the godless exclaimed, as they looked at the sacred fire on the altar of burnt-offerings, "Who among us would dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us would dwell with the everlasting burnings?" Those, however, who willingly submitted themselves to the cleansing of the divine fire of love, the fire on the altar, so far as it was a type of the fire of divine anger, was calculated rather to console than to terrify. It prophesied the destruction of their enemies. After threats had been uttered against the worldly power which was inimical to the kingdom of God, we read in Isaiah xxxi. 9, "thus saith the Lord, who hath a fire in Zion,

and a furnace in Jerusalem:" and out of that was a flame to go forth, which should devour the enemies of God and His people. In the New Testament also we are placed in the midst between two fires, which may be most concisely described, as the fire of the burnt-offering and the fire of the Ban or excommunication;—two fires which originate in the one source of the divine jealousy and the divine energy. Rationalism fails to see this, because it knows not God. Its God, like itself, is remiss in love and remiss in anger. Hence are its supporters unable to understand history, and to find reason and method in the course by which they themselves are led. Providence is no work of a careless idol, the product of men's thoughts, but of a real, living, energetic God. In Mark ix. the Lord summons his disciples, after they had proved themselves weak in the time of temptation, to do battle more vigorously for the future, or rather to be more earnest in devoting themselves absolutely to God, lest they should be cast into hell fire, into the fire which shall never be quenched. "For," as he proceeds to say in verse 49, "every one must be salted with fire:"—that is the only means by which we can escape from the fire of the divine anger. The salting fire, which alone can protect us from the tormenting fire, is the fire of divine love. It sanctifies our saltless nature, so that, for example, we shall no longer dispute, as did the disciples, about the miserable question, which among us is the greatest, but shall have peace one with another.

As our forerunner in the presentation of burnt-offerings, Christ is set before us by St. Paul in Ephesians v. 2. Concerning Him we read that "he gave himself to God an offering and sacrifice, for a sweet smelling savour." The whole life of Christ was one continuous burnt-offering. That it was so, he showed most clearly when he said, "My Father, if it be not possible that this cup pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done,"—when he was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. Origen reckons martyrdom also among the sacrifices. Christ's example shows that he did so rightly. He who would not, if needs be, become a martyr, who would not avoid the cock-crowing and the bitter weeping, shows that all his service of God has been vain, that he has never been

in earnest with the burnt-offerings so strictly required by the law of God. In his case, on the contrary, who has done so, martyrdom is but the revelation of that which was always present in him.

St. Paul says in Romans xii. 1, "I exhort you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your rational service." These words give us the meaning of burnt-offerings. The exhortation to the offering of a self-sacrifice is based on the mercy of God, the depth and greatness of which are set before us in the first part of the Epistle. That God who spared not even his only-begotten Son, but gave Him up for us all, will unquestionably not suffer himself to be put off with halves and fragments; he will not be satisfied with a few idle feelings, with a few hours of devotion, with a few external works connected with the home missions, any more than with a bullock which has horns and hoofs. He demands ourselves, our entire selves: only an ὁλοκαύτωμα, a veritable whole burnt-offering, can satisfy Him. We are to give up our *bodies* to God. "The body," says Bengel, "in many respects hinders the soul: give the body to God and the soul will not fail." As the Apostle says in another place, (chap. viii. 10), the body is yet dead because of sin, even in those whose spirit is life because of righteousness. If, then, even the body ought to be offered for a sacrifice, the demand must be for a total and complete sacrifice. The apostle characterises the presentation of such a sacrifice as a "rational service." An irrational service it is to fancy, with those who derive their name from reason (Rationalists), that He, whose is the earth and all things that are therein, the world, and they that dwell thereon, can be satisfied if we merely wash a spot here and there from the utterly stained and defiled garment of the flesh, or rather, if we do but rub it a little.

Burnt-offerings also ought to be represented more distinctly in our worship than has hitherto been the case. The altar of burnt-offerings, with its ever flaming fire, should find expression in our liturgical forms. That there exists a necessity for some more decided expression of this element, will be seen from some verses (quoted below), of the noble sacrificial song

by John Angelus, in which the idea of the burnt-offering is very clearly embodied.*

One observation more with respect to burnt-offerings. The gifts of love which St. Paul received as the servant of the Lord from the Churches, are described in Philippians iv. 18, in allusion to burnt-offerings, as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God." He thus teaches us that all other gifts and sacrifices to the Lord and for his kingdom arise out of the burnt-offering. He gives us to understand that those who have given themselves really up to Him, both in body and soul, must prove their sincerity by joyfully resigning that which belongs to them. He furnishes a test by which we may try the reality of the inward fact of our self-surrender. Under the Old Covenant it was appointed that the inward act should embody itself, and this embodiment served as a test. The three bullocks, by which Samuel's parents offered their son, and, in their son, their own hearts to the Lord, must have constituted a large portion of their limited property. For that such Levitical families were pretty poor, is plain from the circumstance that Moses repeatedly mentions the Levites, who had no part nor lot with the rest of the Israelites, in conjunction with other wretched persons on whom it was a duty of the rich to bestow of their abundance (see, for example, Deut. xiv. 29). Elkanah and Hannah proved by the external sacrifice which they presented, that the sacrifice of their hearts was real and sincere. Under the New Covenant, now that the custom of representing in an outward form the feelings of the heart has ceased, we ought

* Hochster Priester, der du dich
Selbst geopfert hast für mich,
Lass doch, bitt' ich, noch auf Erden
Auch mein Herz dein Opfer werden.

Drum so tödt und schlachte hin
Meinen Willen, meinen Sinn:
Reiss mein Herz aus meinem Herzen,
Sollt's auch seyn mit tausend Schmerzen.

Trage Holz auf den Altar
Und verbrenn mich ganz und gar,
O du allerliebste Leibe:
Wenn doch nichts mehr von mir bliebe!

to test their sincerity by other means. Would such tests give a satisfactory result?

Thank-offerings next present themselves for consideration. They have this in common with burnt-offerings, that they owe their origin to the state of grace, or may only be brought by such as are in the state of grace. In Scripture they have three different names. The first name is "*slain-offering*." "Sebach," is never used to denote sacrifices in general. The name indicates that this sacrificing stood in a certain relation to the common slaughtering, that the offerer shared in the sacrifice along with the Lord, which was not the case with burnt-offerings, which belonged entirely to God. The second name "Shelamim," signifying "peace-offering,"* expresses more fully the essential nature of the sacrifice. It directs attention to the *occasion* of these sacrifices; they always bore reference to the peace of those who brought them. The third name, "praise-offerings," designates the sentiments embodied in the sacrifices.†

That thank-offerings referred not only to peace received, but also to peace expected, is plain, for two reasons. Firstly, it is inconceivable that precatory sacrifices should altogether fail in the Mosaic Cultus, for the prayer, "Hear the cry of our necessity," is too important an element in the relation of poor mortals to God, on this curse-laden earth, as we see from the Psalms, to be entirely omitted. It ought, on the contrary,

* שָׁלַם, the verb from which שֶׁלֶם is derived, has in Kal only the one meaning, "to be complete, unscathed, sound." Even the Septuagint has explained the word correctly, translating שלם by *σωτήριον* and *εἰρηνικόν*. In favour thereof is also the correspondence with the name of the praise-offerings זבח תודה.

† Several writers have tried, but without success, to change the name of the genus, into the name of a particular species. Leviticus vii. 11 ff, is decidedly opposed, instead of being favourable, to such a course. Verse 12 does not tell us what was to take place in connection with praise-offerings as distinguished from other classes of peace-offerings, but what followed from the nature of the slain sacrifice as a praise-offering. In verse 16, we are informed that the rule, that of the flesh of the praise-offering nothing should be preserved, held good for both species without distinction, namely, for vowed-offerings, and free-will-offerings. That, in all other cases, the praise-offering stands for the entire genus is plain enough (compare, for example, Psalm lvi. 14; liv. 8; cxvi. 17, 18). Nothing in Leviticus xxii. 18, 21, indicates that more than two classes of thank-offerings, namely, vowed-offerings and free-will-offerings existed.

to find a complete representation in sacrifice.* Secondly, thank-offerings were frequently brought on occasions of sorrow, and then they could only refer to benefits expected, and not to those which had been already received. On this ground, according to 2 Samuel xxiv. 25, David brought burnt-offerings and thank-offerings, whilst the punishment of the pride shown in causing the people to be numbered was in course of execution; and only after that had been done was it said, "And the Lord suffered Himself to be entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from the people of Israel." So also, in Judges xx. 26, were thank-offerings brought by the children of Israel, after they had suffered a serious overthrow: and in Judges xxi. 14, after the tribe of Benjamin had been almost entirely exterminated, (compare further 1 Samuel xiii. 9). Two reasons may be advanced, explaining why the petition was expressed in the form of thanks. Firstly, to give thanks for grace already received, is a refined way of begging for more. Whoso asks without returning thanks, prevents his petition being heard. Thankfulness is one of the characteristics by which the congregation of God is distinguished from the world, and he who has not this mark is turned away. The man who only gives praise and thanks will be heard, though he do not expressly pray. That thanksgiving was indirectly prayer, we learn from Psalm ix. and Psalm xl., in which the former precedes the latter. We are taught the same thing by the fact, that the Hallelujah Psalms were composed at the time of the deepest degradation of the people of God. Secondly, the Church of God is distinguished from the world, in that it never prays by way of experiment, as it were, but grounds all its requests on the Divine word and promise, and is able to ask in faith, nothing doubting (James i. 6). One consequence, thereof, is, that its prayer may be expressed in the form of anticipated thanks. Faith feels itself already in possession of the blessing which is to come; as Jesus declared, even before Lazarus was raised from the dead: "Father, I thank Thee

* It is unallowable to say that prayer was represented, along with other things, by the incense. Incense alone would not satisfactorily represent either prayer or thanksgiving, for it involved no sacrifice, no giving up, which could prove the sincerity of the offerer. The spheres of the altar of burnt-offerings, and of the altar of incense, were diverse. Prayer must have its symbol on the former as well as on the latter.

that Thou hast heard Me" (John xi. 41). In the midst of his distress, the Psalmist cries out, after having received the assurance that he would be heard, "I will freely sacrifice to Thee; I will praise Thy name, for it is good" (Psalm liv. 6). With the same joy of deliverance, and whilst his life hung but on a thread, David says elsewhere, "Thy vows are upon me, O God. Thank-offerings will I pay unto Thee" (Psalm lvi. 13).

Thank-offerings were divided into two classes—*offerings of vows*, which were obligatory on him who had made a vow in a time of distress; and freewill-offerings, in connection with which there was no such obligation. The vow originated in self-distrust, in a man's fear of his own lukewarmness, unwillingness, unthankfulness. The offerings which followed upon it occupy a lower position than the freewill-offerings, but stand far higher than that thankless indifference which, after Pharaoh's example, completely forgets God as soon as it can once again breathe freely.

An important difference existed between thank-offerings, on the one hand, and sin-offerings and burnt-offerings on the other, in so far as the latter represented the person of him who brought them, whereas the former were simply *gifts*. This peculiarity was indicated by the circumstance, that not the whole thank-offering, but only single parts thereof, were presented to the Lord. Attention is further called to the difference, by the peculiar way in which mention is made of the offerings. Burnt-offerings and slain-offerings are not unfrequently connected in such a way as that they designate the totality of sacrifices, inclusive of sin-offerings. So, for example, in Leviticus xvii. 8; Numbers xv. 3, 8; Ezra viii. 35, where sin-offerings are expressly reckoned amongst burnt-offerings. Where burnt-offerings are alluded to in this general sense, the contrast drawn is between sacrifices which were entirely consecrated to the Lord, and those of which the offerers also took their share. The former, namely, sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, represented the person; the latter, a particular gift of the person. A present, a gift made in return, is the usual form in which men manifest and give proof of their thankfulness. In his relation to God, man has only one way of proving his thankfulness, to wit, by the thanks itself. The Mosaic Cultus ordained that this thanks should symbolically embody,

itself in an offering. Accordingly, in the case of thank-offerings, the import of the laying on of hands, which in general was a sign of the connection existing between the sacrifice and the offerer, was modified. The laying of the hands on the sin-offering and the burnt-offering said, symbolically, "That am I:"—their laying on the thank-offering said, on the contrary, "That is my gift, my thanks."*

A thank-offering was never allowed to follow immediately on a sin-offering. Its necessary basis was a burnt-offering. We read of the thank-offering in Leviticus iii. 5: "And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar, upon the burnt-sacrifice." Prayer for peace, and thanksgiving for the same, must always be preceded by the consecration and surrender of the whole man to the Lord. Thankfulness has no worth except as it rests on the foundation of that complete self-devotion, to which we are summoned afresh by every display of mercy: indeed, there is no true thankfulness without such devotion.

Although thank-offerings could only be brought by such as were in the state of grace, still the consciousness of sin was represented in them. In this instance also the shedding of blood, and the sprinkling with blood, had an expiatory meaning.

An inseparable accompaniment of God's benefits to His children is the feeling of their own unworthiness. They say with Jacob, in Genesis xxxii. 10, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shown to thy servant:" and with David, in 2 Samuel vii. 18, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" When the Saviour comes to us with healing and blessing, we say with the centurion, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." To the man in a state of grace, every bestowal of mercy is at the same time an exhortation to repentance. He cannot return thanks without humbling himself, without seeking forgiveness for his unworthiness. This element, however, was only a subordinate one in thank-offerings, as is clear from the fact, that the blood was sprinkled in the most general possible form.

A peculiar usage in connection with thank-offerings was, the *heaving* and *waving* of the portions set apart for the officiat-

* It occasions only confusion to suppose that the laying of the hands on burnt-offerings and thank-offerings denoted the imputation of sin.

ing priest. It signified that those portions, no less than the others consumed on the altar, were presented and devoted to the Lord; that the priests received them only as the servants of the Lord. In Numbers viii. 11, where the custom is observed at the appointment of the Levites, it was, undoubtedly, a symbol of consecration. The *heaving* pointed to God as enthroned in the heavens: the *waving* to Him as ruling upon earth—it denoted that which the Psalmist teaches us, when he says, "Thou compassest my path and my lying down" (Psalm cxxxix. 3).

Connected with thank-offerings was the *sacrificial feast.* This, however, was by no means the main feature of the thank-offering: it was itself the main point. The sacrificial feast is set in a false light by those who represent the Lord as the host in the case. Of that not a single trace can be found. The slain sacrifices were, by nature, not whole offerings, and therefore the parts not consecrated to the Lord were eaten. The characteristic is the mutual participation: and the explanation is given us in the words of our Saviour, "If any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This fellowship of those who are in a state of grace constitutes the counterpart to that of the Passover, by which the forgiveness of sin was appropriated; but although immediately connected only with the thank-offering, it presupposed the burnt-offering. Indeed, the latter always preceded, and laid the foundation for the former. The covenant relation is a thoroughly ordered one: disturbances thereof are done away with. In bestowing peace the Lord has, in fact, and virtually, justified His servant, and caused to cease the complaints, "Where is now my God?" "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" On the other hand, the servant has consecrated himself afresh to the Lord, by means of the burnt-offering; and by means of the thank-offering met the claim, "Be ye exceedingly thankful." And now he enters into intimate communion with the Lord, is spiritually married to Him. The sacrificial feasts were the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; times when men could say with their whole heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd," "the Lord is my portion, whom I truly love;" times when the difference between the present and the future state, which

is so often a burden to us, disappears, and we enjoy a foretaste of eternal life.

The sacrificial feasts were, at the same time, *love-feasts.* Besides the man-servant, and maid-servant, the stranger, and the widow, and the orphan, were invited thereto (Deut. xii. 8, xvi. 11 ; Psalm xxii. 27), and were thus made participators in the blessing and joy afforded, and associates of the thanks and the praise expressed in them. A heart open towards heaven cannot possibly remain closed to earth. Unable to give God anything but the mere thanks of the heart, it is a joy to communicate to His creatures of the blessings which He vouchsafes to us. And now that, under the New Covenant, we are no longer able, as under the Old Covenant, to prove the sincerity of our disposition, by means of the outward embodiment of gratitude formerly enjoined, the sacrifice being a purely spiritual one, we ought to feel ourselves more strongly impelled than ever to honour God, by doing good to His widows and orphans.

We may thus understand why, in Hebrews xiii., after the words, "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually ; that is, the fruit of the lips which confess His name," there follow immediately those others,—"To do good and communicate, forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." His exposition of the force of the Old Testament thank-offering would have been incomplete had the apostle been content with mentioning merely the former element.

Thus, then, the great allegory of sacrifice, which ran through the life of the Church of the Old Covenant was a continuous injunction—"Seek the forgiveness of your sins; devote yourselves, body and soul, to the Lord ; call upon Him in times of need, and thank Him for His grace." One element, however, remains, which is unrepresented in the sacrifices and offerings hitherto considered, to wit, *zeal in good works :* and, from the very commencement, this was one of the peculiar characteristics of the true Church of God. To keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgment, is set forth, even in Genesis xviii. 19, as the task of the people of God. This truth was symbolically represented by the bloodless sacrifice or the *meat-offering.*

This class of sacrifices was united, and formed one whole,

with the bloody sacrifices. They were never brought independently. Nor were they ever connected with sin-offerings, but exclusively with burnt-offerings and thank-offerings. Meat-offerings consisted of bread and wine ;—the former was brought in all the different shapes in which corn is prepared for the sustenance of man. In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament these things are the usual symbols and representatives of nourishment. Earthly kings were supplied with physical nutriment by their subjects, and the imposts consisted in great part of the productions of nature (compare Genesis xlix. 20 ; 1 Kings iv. 7). But in this case, where the King is a spiritual, a heavenly one, who dismisses any fancy that He can be refreshed or quickened by material offerings, with the words, " If I were hungry I would not tell thee ; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm l. 12,) the physical food presented to Him can only be a symbol of the spiritual. In accordance with the inseparable connection existing, on the part of God, between giving and requirement, side by side with the petition, " Give us this day our daily bread," and with the *promise* on which that petition is based, goes the demand of God, " Give *me* this day *my* daily bread," and the Church meets this claim when it is zealous in good works. After this *spiritual* food the Lord hungers (Matthew xxi. 18) ; not, however, as though, strictly speaking, He stood in need of it ; for He can equally fulfil the laws of His nature in the punishment of those who refuse to present such offerings. At the same time, the strong expressions employed, show, that, so far as the Lord needs, so far is He not indifferent to such things, and what those have to expect who refuse to satisfy His desires.

The connecting of the meat-offering with the *burnt-offering* taught both that the consecration and surrender of the whole person must necessarily precede good works, and also that good works must necessarily follow ; for Jehovah, the Holy One, who says, " Be ye holy, for I am holy," cannot be served with mere feelings of dependence, or even of love, but requires zeal in the fulfilment of His commands. The only proof of actual surrender recognised by Him is set forth in the words of David : " Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart ;

who backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor uttereth reproaches against his neighbour," (Psalm xv.); and in the words of the Lord: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," (John xv. 14). The connecting of the meat-offering with the thank-offering (Leviticus vii. 12), taught that true thankfulness must show itself, not only in *acknowledgment* (symbolized by the bloody sacrifice), but also in the life and conduct.

The meat-offering of the entire congregation was the *shewbread.* Cakes of this, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, were appointed to lie continually before the face of the Lord, in order that the people might be reminded that their mission was to be zealous in good works. The laying of the shewbread fresh on the table every Sunday (Leviticus xxiv. 7), indicated that zeal in good works should be quickened and stimulated on the days of rest and of assembly before the Lord.

That the zeal in good works, symbolized by meat-offerings, should manifest itself in *missionary operations*, is evident from Isaiah lxvi. 20, where the prophet, after telling how the messengers of Israel will be the first to proclaim the glory of the Lord among the heathen in the time of redemption, says,—"And they shall bring all your brethren for a meat-offering to the Lord, as the children of Israel bring meat-offerings in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." From this we see that zeal in missions to the Jews, now so shamefully neglected, should form part of the meat-offering which we present to the Lord. Missions to the heathen are treated by St. Paul from the same point of view, when, in Romans xv. 16, he represents himself as a servant of Christ among the heathen, in order that the heathen may become a meat-offering, acceptable to God, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The same apostle represents the faithfulness in his calling, showed by him even to the point of sacrificing his life, as a spiritual *drink-offering* —preferring the drink-offering to the meat-offering as a symbol, because of its analogy to the impending shedding of his blood. He says, in Philippians ii. 17, "Yea, and if I be offered (strictly, if I be poured as a drink-offering) on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all:" and again, in 2 Timothy vi. 6, "for I am already offered (*i.e.*, poured out as a drink-offering), and the time of my departure is at hand."

According to Leviticus ii. 11, the meat-offering was obliged to be without *leaven and honey.* Leaven, in Scripture, is the symbol of corruption. The name *unleavened bread,* denoted *pure* bread. Its spiritual correspondent St. Paul describes as *purity* and *truth.* The prohibition of leaven calls attention to the corruption of our nature. Good works should not be disfigured and made unfit for the spiritual food of the holy God, by any mixture of impure elements, such as issue only too readily from the corrupt depths of our nature. "Therefore take heed to your spirit," says Malachi, in chap. ii. 15. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." *Honey,* being a favourite dish in oriental countries, is the symbol of the *lust of the world.* Similarly, Hosea says, in chap. iii. 1, concerning the worldly-minded Israelites, "They love cakes of grapes." The prohibition of honey was consequently a standing admonition to the people: "If ye will bring spiritual food, which is acceptable to the Lord, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16); let the lust of the world be bitter to you—the commands of God, on the contrary, "sweeter than honey or the honey comb," (Psalm xix. 11). What was *bitter* formed the contrast to honey; for example, the bitter roots which were appointed to be eaten at the Passover. The believer loves not the sweets of the world. He loves the bitters of his beloved cross: for through much tribulation must we enter into the kingdom of God, and the wine-press only presses out the wine.

Hand in hand with the *prohibition* of leaven and honey goes the *command,* to mix oil and salt with the sacrifices. *Oil* is spirit. The point of comparison is the smoothness and soft pliancy (Psalm lv. 22; Isaiah i. 6), in contrast to hardness of nature, whether in a coarse or a refined form. To be in the spirit is the privilege of the people of God. "But if we live in the spirit we should also walk in the spirit," (Galatians v. 25). God is a spirit, and therefore only such works can please Him as are pervaded and saturated with spirit. Everything else is but a dead form. In the symbolism of Holy Scripture, salt is invariably, and only, spoken of in that aspect of it which first suggests itself, to wit, as a *seasoning for food:* and, in the present instance, as we have to do with *meat-offer*

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ings, it is as needless as it is improper, to suppose it to be referred to in any other sense. A "covenant of salt," of which mention is twice made in the Scripture (Numbers xviii. 19; 2 Chronicles xiii. 5), is a covenant whose words do not lack the seasoning of truth and sincerity. The explanation of those solemn words, "All thy meat-offerings shalt thou season with salt, neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering," (Leviticus ii. 13), is given by Paul in Colossians iv. 6: "Let your speech be alway with grace, and seasoned with *salt*, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." According to this, *salt* designates *grace*, in contrast to the saltlessness of the *natural* state of man. Of all that is merely natural—of all sociality, of all science, of all art, of all works, which have their roots in the soil, *nature*, that holds true which Job spake concerning the discourses of his friends: "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" (Job vi. 6). Elisha healed an evil well of water with salt (2 Kings ii. 20). That well was a symbol of our nature, which needs to be seasoned with grace. Why was it so foolish a thing for the sons of God, in old time, to woo and marry the daughters of men? Because these latter had no salt, and the union with them drew forth the natural element from the background, drove out grace, and of necessity caused the salt to lose its savour.

A third addition to the meat-offering was *frankincense* (Leviticus ii. 15). The sweet-smelling, burning frankincense is everywhere in Scripture the symbol of prayer, which is acceptable in the sight of God, (compare Psalm cxli. 2; Luke i. 10; Revelations v. 8, iii. 4). The mixing of frankincense with meat-offerings, taught that un
and finished with prayer. But the exhortation, "pray without ceasing," was represented in a special manner in the Cultus. Prayer was shadowed forth, and believers were reminded of the duty and blessedness thereof (Psalm cxli. 2), by the *incense* which was daily offered, both at night and in the morning.

The New Covenant is not the termination, but the *glorification* of sacrifice. Looking forward to the days of the Redeemer, Malachi, the last of the prophets, says, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, shall

My name be glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place shall incense be offered unto My name, and a pure meat-offering shall be brought" (chap. i. 11). The chief among the apostles calls Christians, "a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, well pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ" (2 Peter ii. 5). Let us beware that we hear not the severe word once spoken to the people of the Old Covenant, "Ye offer that which is lame and sick. Should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord? Cursed be the deceiver, which sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the Lord of Sabaoth, and My name is terrible among the heathen."

THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH:

BY

PROFESSOR DR. E. W. HENGSTENBERG.

THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I. THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON THIS SUBJECT.

It was the universal conviction of the Christian Church, at an earlier period, that the hardness displayed by the Jews in respect of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, was only temporary. It had taken truly to heart those words of the Apostle of the Gentiles—"if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive-tree." With perfect justice Spener remarks, "The Christian Church in all ages has believed in such an admirable conversion of the Jews, and not more than one or two of the old fathers can be mentioned, who called this in question."* To represent the age of the Church Fathers, we may introduce St. Ambrosius. In the last chapter of his work on the Patriarch Joseph, he says, "in the last ages Christ will take to Himself the Jewish nation, when it has attained old age and has become weary, not however for its own merits, but according to the election of grace. He will lay His hand on its eyes and take away its blindness. He has delayed to heal it, so that as it has fancied that it ought not to believe, it might be the last to believe, and might thus lose the advantage of the prior election."†

* "Behauptung der Hoffnung zukünftiger besserer Zeiten," Frankfurt, 1693. s. 327.

† Opp. ed. Venet. 1781 t. 1 p. 452. "Hic senilis jam ætatis et fessum suscipiet ultimis temporibus populum Judæorum, non secundum illius merita, sed

With respect to Luther, Walch remarks,* "His opinions on the conversion of the Jews, were not always of the same cast. At first, he thought that it was to be looked for and expected: but latterly he did not hesitate to cast away such hopes."

At the commencement of his career, Luther cherished this precious hope of the Church with an energy seldom equalled. He had drawn it not merely from the traditions of the Church, but also, nay chiefly, from a living intercourse with the Scriptures, especially with the Epistle to the Romans, so highly prized by him. A conviction possessed him that in his own day, and through his own efforts, the Church had received into its hands new means for the crushing of the obduracy of the Jews. He was disposed to find the secret of the fruitlessness of earlier attempts, not in the character of the Jews themselves, but in the heartlessness of Christians and the perversity of the means employed by them. Nor did Luther content himself with a mere theory. Freshly and joyfully he put his hand to the work, expecting success with the greater confidence, as the blessing of the Lord had so clearly attended his preaching of the pure Gospel in other quarters, and as everywhere else God appeared to be fulfilling the declaration—"behold the winter has departed, the rain is past and gone. The flowers spring forth in the land, spring has arrived, and the voice of the turtle-doves may be heard in our land."

Of this mood of Luther, the most important memorial is the work published in 1523, under the title, "That Jesus Christ is a born Jew." This was strictly speaking, a tractate intended to exercise an influence on the Jews. Justus Jonas, who translated it into Latin, in order that it might be circulated throughout the whole world, concludes his preface, with the following words, which accurately describe the tendency of the work;—"Let us pray for this people, especially considering that not all in our midst are Christians, who bear the name of Christ. Would God that our work with the Jews might prosper as it has done elsewhere; for wonderful and glorious indeed have been the effects produced by the word

secundum electionem gratiæ: et imponet manus super oculos ejus, ut cæcitatem auferat. Cujus ideo distulit sanitatem ut postremus crederet, qui ante non putavit esse credendum, et prærogativam superioris electionis amitteret."

* Luther's Werke. Th. 20., S 91.

of God, in the very short time during which it has been preached."*

To give some notion of Luther's views and feelings at this time, we will quote some of the most characteristic utterances of the treatise referred to.

"Our fools, the popes, bishops, sophists and monks, those coarse asses-heads, have hitherto proceeded with the Jews in such a fashion, that he who was a good Christian might well have desired to become a Jew. And if I had been a Jew and had seen the Christian faith governed and taught by such blockheads and dolts, I should sooner have become a hog than a Christian. For they have treated the Jews as though they were dogs and not men: they have been able to do nothing but scoff at them, and seize their property: when they were baptized, they showed them neither true Christian doctrine nor life, but simply subjected them to popery and monkery. My hope is, that if we act kindly towards the Jews, and instruct them tenderly out of the Holy Scriptures, many of them will become genuine Christians, and so return to the faith of their fathers, the Prophets and Patriarchs. But we shall only frighten them further away therefrom, by utterly rejecting their views of things, allowing nothing to be right, and treating themselves with haughtiness and contempt. If the Apostles, who also were Jews, had acted towards us, the heathen, as we, the heathen, act towards the Jews, never a heathen would have become a Christian. Inasmuch then as they treated us heathens in so brotherly a manner, we ought to treat the Jews in a brotherly way, if so be that some may be converted. And be it remembered, we are ourselves not all up to the point, much less far advanced. My request and advice therefore is, to go gently to work with them, and so to instruct them from the Scriptures, that some perchance may be drawn in. But if we only use force, and go about with lying and defamatory stories, and charge them with having Christian blood if they do not stink, and I know not what fool's work besides; if we hold them at once to be dogs, what good can we possibly do them? Furthermore, if we forbid them to labour and work amongst us, and to join with us in

* W. W. Th. 20, S 2266.

other pursuits of men, thus driving them to usury and the like, what the better do we make them? If we mean to help them, we must put into operation towards them, not the laws of the pope, but of Christian love, we must receive them friendly, let them trade and work with us, so that, having cause and opportunity to be with us and about us, they may hear and see our Christian doctrine and life. Though some remain stiff-necked, what doth it matter? Are we all of us true Christians? Here however I will leave the matter, till I see how my work prosper. God grant us all His grace. Amen."

The same spirit of hearty love to the Jews is breathed by Luther's letter to Bernhard, a converted Jew.* There, also, he expresses his confident hope that the newly shining light of the Gospel will irradiate them also. He says, "because the inestimable light of the Gospel is now arising, and shedding its bright rays all around, we cherish the hope that many of the Jews will be sincerely and honestly converted, and be drawn to Christ with their whole heart, like yourself and some others, who are the remnant of the seed of Abraham."

But the thing turned out quite differently from Luther's expectation. Here and there, it is true, a Jew was won over to the faith. But, on the whole, the Reformation proved itself unable to overcome the hardness of the Jewish heart. Nay more, Luther himself lived to witness several conversions to Judaism. This latter fact is touched upon by him in the letter against the "Sabbathites," addressed to one of his friends in the year 1538.† He says, "you inform me that here and there in different parts, the Jews gain ground with their filth and doctrine, and that some Christians even, have been carried away to allow themselves to be circumcised." He alludes to the same subject again in his work on "the Jews and their lies," published in 1543.

"I have issued this little book because, as I understand, these wretched reprobates do not cease their efforts to allure even us Christians into their ways. I should never have deemed it possible for a Christian to let himself so be made a fool of

* W. W., Th. 20, S 2268. † W. W., Th. 20, S 2272.

by Jews, as to be persuaded to share their misery and wretchedness."

Then Luther felt himself stirred by a burning wrath—a wrath which in its deepest roots was divine, and of the same nature as that displayed by St. John, when, in his zeal against the Jews, he says, "those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the school of Satan," (Apocalypse ii. 9 ; iii. 9.) Moses felt the same indignation when he grew furious at the sight of Israel's idolatry, and cast the tables out of his hand and brake them beneath the Mount. Luther's anger was that of despised love,—not his own human love, but the love of his Lord :—it was the anger which made Stephen cry out in the Sanhedrim, "ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit ; as were your fathers, so are ye."

Let us bring to view this later mood of Luther's mind by means of a few verbal extracts from his writings.

In his work on "Shem Hamphoras,"* Luther says—"to convert the Jews is about as possible as to convert the devil. A Jewish heart is so stone, iron, devil-hard and callous, that there is no way at all of moving it. In fine, they are young devils, damned to hell. And if there be anything human left in them, such a work may prove of use and profit. But of the whole mass of them, he may cherish hope who likes,—I have no hopes, nor do the Scriptures speak of any. Some draw from the Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, a fancy that all the Jews will be converted at the end of the world, but it is all nought. St. Paul means quite a different thing."

"The Jews are a hard people," says Luther, in his "Table Talk." "Then answered one, but still is it not written that the Jews shall be converted before the last judgment? Dr. Luther spake : where is it written? I know of no clear and certain declaration. Some, it is true, bring one from Romans xi ; but from that nothing can be proved. Then said his wife—'and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' Yes, replied the Doctor, dear Kate, that took place when the heathen were converted to the Gospel."†

* W. W., Th. 20, S 2528-3. † S 2315.

In his book on "The Jews and their lies," Luther says—"Much less do I go about with the notion that the Jews are to be converted. That is impossible.* For consider, how is it that we poor Christians come to nourish and make rich such a rotten and lazy people, such blasphemous enemies of God, and all for nothing: for we get nothing for our pains but curses, blasphemy, and all manner of misfortune, that they can bring upon us or wish us.† Burn their synagogues, then, force them to work, and treat them with all unmercifulness."‡

Quite as strong expressions may be found in the "admonition against the Jews, with which Luther concluded the four sermons delivered at Eisleben, shortly before his departure from this life, in the year 1546."‖ Amongst other things he says there, "Thus is it, then, with the Jews—they do nought but blaspheme and revile our Lord Jesus Christ every day. If we know that they do this, we ought not to suffer it. For if I tolerate him near me, who reviles, blasphemes, and curses my Lord Christ, I make myself a partaker of other men's sins, whilst at the very time I have quite enough to do with mine own. Therefore, ye lords should not suffer them, but drive them away. In case, however, they become converted, quit their usury, and accept Christ in sincerity, then will we cheerfully regard them as our brothers. Otherwise nothing can be done with them: for they are too bold, they are publicly our enemies, they do not cease to blaspheme our Lord Christ, they style the virgin Mary a whore, and Christ Himself a whoreson, and call them changelings;—if they could kill us all they would gladly do so—nay, some of them do it often, particularly such as pretend to be physicians. I put myself under the protection of the Son of God, whom I hold to be my Lord, and honour as such. To Him I must run and flee when the devil, or sin, or any other evil sets upon me: for He is my shelter and covert, beneath which I am safe against the wrath of God. For such reasons am I unable to have fellowship or patience with the hardened blasphemers and revilers of this dear Saviour."

The position taken up by Luther towards the Jews in his later years, is well fitted to exhibit and bring home to us the

* W. W., 20, S 2313. † S 2488. ‡ S 2509. ‖ W., S 2630

difference between him and the Apostles, and to show what a dangerous thing it would be to submit ourselves to such a master, unreservedly, and without bringing his teachings to the test of Scripture. We must not, however, forget that in Luther's time, the Jews behaved very differently from the present day, when their hatred and their love alike has been shorn of its strength by unbelief, when the interest in money and property has swallowed up every other care. It is difficult now to represent to our minds the diabolical hatred of Christ and Christians, which filled the elder Jews. Nothing can be more unjust than to represent them as sufferers, and persecuted. What they had to endure was in general but the reaction against the fanatical animosity which flamed in their own hearts. It is related of a proselyte, even of the middle of the eighteenth century, Israel Levi, the history of whose conversion is peculiarly interesting,* that "the recollections of his youth frequently filled him with sore repentance. He remembered how at Christmas, when the Catholics went to their churches at twelve o'clock at night, he, with other Jewish children, played according to their custom round a wooden image which represented the executed one, namely, Jesus the crucified One: and how they tore and broke off one limb after the other, until their play was ended." Whenever he thought of these scenes, he exclaimed—"Oh! what great and fearful sins do the Jews commit! May God have mercy on them!"

When Luther introduces into the Scriptures, whose end and aim is everywhere to strengthen our sinking courage, the despair of the conversion of the Jews felt by himself; when he sets aside the clear and evident testimony to the future conversion of the Jews borne by the Scriptures, he is undoubtedly not to be commended; but still, what he did in his day is to be judged otherwise than if it were done at the present day. Up to Luther's time, the principle of allegorical interpretation prevailed in the Church, and the result thereof was, that in explaining the Scriptures, men were governed by inclination, and found in them that, and that only, which agreed with their wishes. Luther did, it is true, overthrow the principle, as a principle; but he was not able to uproot the

* Steger "die evangelische Judenmission," S 80.

practice, either for himself or for others. Hence, as soon as his hopes concerning Israel seemed visionary, he almost unavoidably ceased to be able to lean confidently on those parts of Scripture which relate to this matter. Only by degrees could that leaven of allegorical arbitrariness be cast out, by the principle of literal or grammatical interpretation which Luther brought into vogue. The result of the introduction of the principle has happily been, to take away from the exposition of Scripture, the character of subjectiveness which it previously bore, and, in the Scriptures themselves, to give every one who does not wilfully refuse to avail himself of the benefits of this progressive step, an objective corrective of his own inclination or fancy.

It cannot but be acknowledged that, in his anger at the hardness of heart shown by the Jews, and in the energy of his zeal for the honour of Christ, Luther took up a one-sided point of view, which needs to be supplemented by an equally strong recognition of the compassion and love of God for the "sons of the kingdom." But still unquestionably there was more truth to facts in this view of Luther's, than in the efforts put forth in more recent times by many of the friends of Israel. These latter seem to fancy it possible to flatter that wretched people into the kingdom of God; they have no just or sufficient feeling of the terrible guilt resting upon it, and are incapable of awakening a consciousness thereof; they forget that the object of first moment is to produce in them that "great mourning" to which Zechariah alludes, (see chap. xii. 11;) they strengthen and uphold the "old man" of the Jews by drawing the attention away from the duty of repentance to the high prerogatives which are supposed to belong to the nation, and by exciting them to imagine that it is their destiny and vocation to be the spiritual aristocracy of the Christian Church; and consequently, their endeavours, if they effect anything at all, must end in turning, not Jews into Christians, but Jewish Jews into Christian Jews, or into Jewish Christians. Luther had a deep and clear insight into the spirit of the Jews. We find in his "Table Talk,"—"Luther was reading a Hebrew book, and was very greatly astonished at its audacity and haughtiness. It displayed no knowledge of Scripture, but was filled with vain boasts of dead privileges. They have no under-

standing of God's grace, nor of the righteousness of faith, how God is merciful from simple grace for Christ's sake, andhow faith in Christ makes men pious and blessed. Concerning such things they know less than nothing ; and they wish to be holy by nature and in virtue of descent." What a dangerous thing therefore it must be to flatter this self-conceited, pretentious "old man" of the Jews, as it is flattered, by such assertions as the following, contained in the work entitled, "Der Jude von Alfred Meyers," (translated from the English), "All the Prophets promise this nation a position of privilege and honour in the kingdom of Immanuel;" "The day of Israel's conversion will be the day of Messiah's coronation;" "converted Jews are the only successful missionaries to the heathen world;" "Jehovah has conferred on the Jews the privilege of royalty;" and many others of a like nature. Even if these views were correct it would be very injudicious, very unpedagogic, to commence the missionary work amongst Jews with their announcement. Every means should rather be employed to turn away their hearts from the meditation of such things, which, of necessity, concern them not, so long as they remain what they are, and to lead them down into the depths of repentance and of supplication for mercy.

A. von Oettingen, in his work entitled, *Die Synagogale Elegik des Volkes Israel,* published at Dorpat in 1853,*—a work which concedes more to the Jews than, according to our convictions, is warranted by the Scriptures, rightly understood, —says, with perfect justice, "One point remains to be urged on the attention of our readers,—one, too, which should be more earnestly impressed on the mind of the present generation, than even the care against a proud self-exaltation above the curse-laden nation to which Christians were once prone. Instead thereof we see now an antiscriptural disposition to effect an apotheosis of the Israelites. Regarding exclusively their destiny to redemption, Christians fall into the mistake, of either forgetting entirely, or putting into the background, their terrible crimes. They cover over everything, yea, even the disgrace of Christ! with the mantle of love, and speak only of the thankfulness we owe to this great and noble people, of the sympathy we ought to have with it in its sufferings and inno-

* S. 167, 168

merable persecutions, of the benefits which it has been the means of conferring on all humanity, of the blessings which it will bring to the Church as the result of its vocation, and of the glorification awaiting its divinely chosen nationality, as contrasted with all other peoples, when it shall lay the topstone to the perfection of the kingdom of God, (v. Oettingen proves and illustrates his statements by quotations from the writings of Gaussen, M'Caul, Begg, and others.) All this is, to a certain extent, justifiable; but it must not be pressed too far. There is a danger of forgettiug the sacredness of that anger of God which rests on the Jews, because of the one great and still enduring sin: it is forgotten that their misery is to be regarded as a judgment inflicted on them by God, and not merely as the fruit of "the arbitrariness and cruelty of men," who do but in many cases serve as instruments in a higher hand: and lastly, "men with such views fix their thoughts, like the Jews themselves, in an external way, on the glories of the future, instead of preaching to them of the present, *i.e.*, instead of bringing home to them, chiefly and repeatedly, the sin of rejecting the Lord, and showing the curse of the present to be the divine answer thereto."

In connection with Luther, we must draw attention to another remarkable fact. In his Church-postil,* Luther had said, "It is certain, then, that the Jews will yet say to Christ, 'Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" Moses has declared the same thing, (see Deuteronomy iv. 30, 31; Hosea iii. 4, 5; and Azariah in 2 Chronicles xv. 2-5). These sayings may not be understood by the Jews of the present day. In former times they were never yet without princes, without prophets, without priests, without teacher, and law. St. Paul, in Romans xi. 25, 26, agrees therewith, and says, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. God grant that the time may be nearer than we hope!" So run the words, both in the older editions, and also in those which appeared in 1543 and 1544. Luther evidently hesitated, and was fearful of altering them: a feeling stirred within him that, as regards

* W. W. 11. S. 299.

his present views, he might possibly be on the wrong path. His disciples were bolder. In the very first edition which was published after his death, in the year 1547, we find that everything is omitted which referred to the future conversion of the Jews: and not merely that, but they inserted opinions to the contrary, in the place of what was expunged. In one place we read the alteration, "These sayings all speak of the last days, when the Jewish kingdom and the true priesthood should cease; and teach us that, nevertheless, many Jews would be afterwards converted to Christ, the true King and Priest: and this *took place* after the ascension of Christ, first by means of the apostles, and subsequently through the preaching of the Gospel."

In the Lutheran Church, however, the word of God gained the victory over the authority of Luther, both in respect to this point, and to other peculiar opinions of his. Spener remarks, with perfect justice: "From the time of Luther onwards, notwithstanding that in some places of his writings, moved by the sight of the hardness of the nation, he expressed doubts thereof, this doctrine has had its place in the Lutheran Church, and has been held by its most distinguished teachers. I do not, of course, deny that there have been some who called the doctrine in question." The most important of those who have held this exceptional view (for it has been an exceptional view), were Calov, and Quensted, the author of the work on Dogmatical Theology. The former explains the passage, Romans xi. 25, to refer to the conversion of individual Jews, which has been going on in all ages since the days of the apostles, and will go on to the end of the world, "omni tempore ex Israele nonnulli." See also Quensted's Works, vol. iv., p. 116. During the time of the rule of Church orthodoxy, however, the influence of Luther's authority is almost everywhere perceivable, in so far as the doctrine was much less confidently and cheerfully affirmed than it would have been apart from this influence. The remark just made is illustrated by the case of Joh. Gerhard. It was Spener's merit, as also, indeed, of the Pietistic school in general, fully to reanimate in the Church the hope of the future conversion of the Jews. A new impulse was thus given to missionary efforts; and various other results have also followed. At the same time Spener

gave that limitation to the hope, which is necessary in order to prevent our being led to the most dangerous conclusions. He remarks elsewhere: "Blindness is said to have happened to Israel, because by far the greater part of the nation remained in their error, although many thousands had been converted, and the number of the latter was not to be compared to that of the former: so also when it is said that all Israel will be converted, it means that the greatest part will be converted; and although some will continue hardened, they are not to be compared, in point of numbers, with those who renounce their error."

The hope of the future salvation of Israel, cherished in all ages by the Church, has taken, in the present century, a peculiar form, amongst a not unimportant section of the believing Christians of England and Scotland,* which, since then, has found many adherents in Germany, and especially in Würtemberg. They were not satisfied with the clear teachings of Scripture, concerning the future conversion of Israel, and its blessed influence on the Church as a whole, but went so far as to constitute the converted Jews almost the sole agents in effecting the redemption of the Church of the future, thus doing dishonour to Christ. The past and present of the Church were almost completely cast into the shade in comparison with this future: in consequence of a slavish adherence to the letter, they worked themselves into enthusiasm for the return of the Jews to Palestine; and they dreamed of the extension of the Holy Land, of the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, and of the re-establishment of the Levitical Cultus. The details of these hopes were carried out in the most insipid and prosaic manner, to such a point, indeed, as sometimes to surpass even the Rabbins, to the disgust of all who have but sipped of a deeper understanding of prophecy.

Opposition to these errors, in conjunction with an over estimate of the authority of Luther, has recently led away a Lutheran Synod in America entirely to renounce, and even ecclesiastically to repudiate, the precious hope of the future restoration of the Jews, which the Church has cherished, and which

* It must not, however, be forgotten, that this is, after all, only the *view of a party*—a party, too, which by no means predominates, especially in the Episcopal Church.

occasioned the apostle Paul, in Romans xi. 33, f, to praise so enthusiastically the depth of the riches of God. In the "Transactions of the Second Sessions of the Western District of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, in the year 1856," the following resolution is recorded (page 29): "We reject as unbiblical, and as leading to false Chiliastic views of the Church, the doctrine based on Romans xi. 25, 26, and other passages, that a universal, or even such a specially numerous, conversion of the Jews, as has never hitherto been witnessed, must be expected, and will take place, before the last judgment." In support of this resolution the following remark was made, amongst others: "If it really be so, that all Jews are to be saved, one might well desire rather to be a Jew than a Christian; and, in fact, some of the Lutherans of New York, feeling this, have been induced to become Jews, and submit themselves to circumcision, in the awfully blind hope that, as Abraham's seed, they should be counted worthy of greater glory at the re-appearance of Christ."

II. THE TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

If we wish our hope of the future conversion of the Jews to be built on the firm foundation of the word of God; if we desire to avoid the danger of following our own dreams, and the sin of framing arbitrary fancies; if we are minded to escape sharing the guilt of those whom Jeremiah designates, "Prophets out of their own heart," the first and most necessary thing to be done, is to gain deeper insight into the Scriptural idea of Israel. Nothing is more confusing than without further inquiry to refer everything to the Jews which the Scriptures say regarding Israel. The Scriptural conception of Israel is a very subtle one, and requires for its understanding properly exercised spiritual faculties.

Chr. A. Crusius has given quite the correct view of this idea in his *Theologia Prophetica*. He rejects, it is true, and with perfect justice, the distinction usually drawn by the older orthodox theologians between Israel after the flesh, and Israel after the spirit, but still considers the entire Christian Church to be the legitimate continuance of Israel. Views wanting in

precision, such as those of von Meyer, who maintains that it is arbitrary and unwarranted to understand by Israel "first the Jews, and then something quite different," (page 199), he is very far from entertaining. He says, "all true Christians are reckoned to Israel; not, however, as though the old Israel, the Israel properly so termed, were a type of the spiritual Israel, of the Israel improperly so termed. Even the Old Israel of God could receive Proselytes into its midst before Christ came, and these then constituted a part of the nation. But since Christ's appearance, Israel has been extended, through the reception of great multitudes of the heathen who have now grown together with it. Into this fellowship of the Church, whose foundation was the believing portion of the Israelites, will some day be received the remainder of the degenerate portion."

According to the constant teachings of the Old and New Testaments there is but one Church of God, one Israel, one house under two administrations, from the days of Abraham till the end of the world. John the Baptist starts with the presupposition that the members of the New Covenant must also of necessity be the children of Abraham: otherwise God's covenant and promise would come to nought. But God can raise up from the stones children to Abraham. Fleshly derivation from Abraham did not, we find, insure against the danger of being excluded from the number of his descendants. Of this Ishmael was the first example. And whenever a great sin was committed, we read, even in the books of Moses, "this soul was destroyed from the midst of its people:"—(to which Peter warningly called the attention of the Jews in the Acts of the Apostles iii. 23):—and also, "thou shalt destroy the evil one from the midst of Israel." In Psalm lxxiii. 1, "Only good is God to Israel, to those who are of a clean heart," the second clause limits Israel to the *Election*, to the true Israelites in whom is no guile, and excludes "the false seed" referred to by Isaiah in chap. lvii. 4. So also when we read in Psalm xxiv. 6, that, "those who seek thy face are Jacob," we learn that those only are the true descendants of Jacob, and constitute the covenant people, who strive zealously to be holy and to fulfil the good pleasure of God:—such alone are under the rule, and in the kingdom, of grace. Furthermore,

in a great number of passages, the ungodly members of the Jewish congregation, in mockery of the claims they put forth on the ground of their external connection therewith, are styled heathen, or uncircumcised, or specially Canaanites, or the name of some other Gentile nation is applied to them (see Jeremiah iv. 4; ix. 25; Isaiah i. 10; Ezekiel xvi. 3). And as it was possible for the natural sons to be excluded, so is it possible for God, in His unbounded freedom, to give to Abraham, in the place of the fleshly sons who have failed, sons of adoption unnumbered, who shall sit down with him and Isaac and Jacob at table in the kingdom of God, whilst the sons of the kingdom are shut out. Sonship is essentially a relation to persons, such as Abraham, the friend of God (Isaiah xli. 8), and Israel, who strove with God by prayers and tears (Hosea xii. 5): it does not consist exclusively, or even principally, in the participation in a particular physical nature. What a subordinate element this latter is, we are taught very clearly, at the very beginning of the kingdom of God, by the example of Ishmael, whom Abraham sent away from his house without hesitation; and also by the case of the sons of Kethurah, whom Abraham "sent away from his son Isaac (while he yet lived) eastward, into the east country," (Genesis xxv. 6). And when the Scriptures expressly tell us that Isaac only was in the true sense Abraham's son, they teach us the same thing (Genesis xxi. 12). Physical derivation from Abraham is only of importance when the "glory" of the ancestor, that is, his close and intimate relationship to God, is reflected and reproduced in the descendant. Even if an absolute union and connection be effected only in this most essential aspect, if the sonship be merely a spiritual one, we may speak in the fullest and deepest sense of a relationship of family. The widest use is made in Scripture of the spiritual fatherhood. "Sons of God" are the pious designated even in Genesis vi. 2. To the blessing of Jacob recorded in Genesis xlix., that which Moses pronounced in Deuteronomy xxxiii. as the spiritual father of Israel, forms the side-piece. Those who received a portion of the Spirit which stirred in the most eminent prophets, were styled "Sons of the Prophets." Isaiah calls the first High Priest, Aaron, the first *Father* of Israel. "My Father, my Father," cried Joash, the King of Israel, to

Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 14). Peter writes of Mark as of his son. And much else of the same nature might be adduced.

From the very commencement the Church of God was intended to consist not merely of the naturally born descendants of the Patriarchs, but also of spiritual descendants: the principle of graffing, of adoption, set forth by the Apostle Paul in Romans xi. 24, was intended to be carried out in it. In the first century of the existence of the Church of God the sons by adoption were far more numerous than the actual sons. Abraham was commanded to circumcise his servants, who were numbered by hundreds, that is, to dispense to them the sacrament which involved their becoming sharers of all the rights and privileges of the people of God. We see plainly that at the very earliest period born heathens were expected to become members of the kingdom of God, from the ordinance of Exodus xii. 44, that every stranger who desired to eat with them of the Passover must first be circumcised; which, of course, implies that foreigners might share the sign of the covenant, as well as the feast of the covenant, if they wished. We find also in Deuteronomy xxiii. 1-8, that Edomites and Egyptians are expressly declared capable of being admitted into the congregation of God. The practice of the Jews in all ages leads to the same result. Heathens were constantly received into the fellowship, and to a full share of the privileges, of Israel. Whenever the God of Israel manifested his almighty power and glory in a specially notable way, as for example, in the deliverance of the children of Israel from the captivity in Egypt and from that in Assyria,—(on both which occasions, a host of men, formerly heathens, followed in the train of the Israelites; compare Nehemiah x. 28, who speaks of "all who had separated themselves from the people of the land unto the law of God,")—or again, in the marvellous deliverance celebrated in the Book of Esther,—(then many of the people of the land became Jews, because of the light and joy and gladness and honour which had fallen to the lot of God's people), such receptions took place in large numbers. This was the case also in the times which followed Alexander the Great, when a sense of the vanity of idols stirred with peculiar energy in the heathen world, and the heathenism of Greece and Rome was growing old and hastening towards its

downfal. The prophets announce that a most extensive reception of born heathens into the fellowship of Israel will take place in the age of Messiah, and that all the restrictions which still existed under the Old Covenant will be abolished. In chap. xliv. 5, Isaiah says, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall write with his hand 'To the Lord!' and shall make his boast in the name of Israel." He says also in chapter lvi. 3, "Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, the Lord separateth me from his people;" and in verses 6 and 7, "Also the strangers who join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and holdeth fast to my covenant: even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." We read in Ezekiel xlvii. 22, 23, "and when ye divide by lot the inheritance among you, and among the strangers that sojourn among you, and beget children among you; and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel: they shall have inheritance with you amongst the tribes of Israel, each one amongst the tribe in the midst of which he dwells:" on which Michaelis remarks, "the distinction between the nations, which was kept up under the Old Covenant, is here abolished." Hand in hand with this signal adoption of the heathens, the prophets proclaim an equally extensive exclusion of the false seed, of the merely natural descendants of the patriarchs, who had degenerated into Canaanites. In chapter xliv. 9, Ezekiel characterises the ungodly Priests and Levites as sons of the stranger. Isaiah in chap. i. 10, speaks of the Princes of Israel as Princes of Sodom, and of the people, as a people of Gomorrah. It is said in Ezekiel xvi. 3, "thus saith the Lord to Jerusalem, thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan: thy father is the Amorite and thy mother a Hittite." The downfal of the covenant people is proclaimed by Zephaniah, in the words, "destroyed is the whole people of Canaan." Hosea says, concerning the degenerated covenant people, "Canaan, in his hand are the balances of deceit." If

it is possible for Israelites to degenerate into sons of the stranger, into Sodomites, into Canaanites, as even Moses proclaimed in Deuteronomy xxxii. 32, "for their vine is worse than the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah;" then, on the other hand, must it also be possible for born heathens, by receiving into their hearts the principles which animated the true Israel, to be incorporated with Israel:—it may even happen that Israel will consist mainly of such as once were heathens. Israel's essential feature was not its natural, bodily descent from Abraham. Merely in this aspect it might be said of the Israelites quite as truly as of the heathen—"they are not a people," (Deut. xxxii. 21). "No real State can be established unless the natural factor be supplemented by a moral one; unless a moral idea take up its position as the centre of a nation's natural unity," (Leo). The living idea which formed the groundwork of Israel's nationality, was that of the kingdom of God established in its midst. Only those were true members of Israel, in whose hearts this idea had become the ruling power. Whoso therefore participated in this soul of the national fellowship, was externally made a member thereof: whoso resisted the idea, concerning him it was declared, "this soul is destroyed from the midst of its nation."

At the very threshold of the New Testament, we find the Baptist addressing a whole host of the legitimate sons of the patriarchs as a "brood of vipers," and thus separating them from the true Israel (Mat. iii. 7). He says to them, "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." If even of the stones, how much more of the heathen, within whose breasts there is a feeling heart, and whose fitness for redemption is prominently brought out in the Book of Jonah, to the shame of the self-conceited sons of the kingdom! The Baptist starts with the assumption, that all those whose purpose it is, as members of the kingdom of God, to escape the wrath to come, must be children of Abraham and of the patriarchs, members of Israel. But to be of the community of Israel did not depend solely on natural birth: it could be arrived at in a purely spiritual way, even as in the usual course of things adopted sons may

be much more truly stirred by the spirit of family than even the natural sons. As the better portion of Abraham and Jacob,—that portion which alone lends them dignity and significance,—in the kingdom of God originates directly in God; so, by the like influence which was brought to bear upon them, can God raise up to them true sons, without binding Himself to the ordinary course of nature.

Much that our Lord said was dictated by the view of the essential identity of Israel with the Church of the New Testament, by the conviction that it includes, besides the believing descendants of the patriarchs, also their adopted sons, even the entire world of heathen believers. So in Matthew xix. 28, where he says to the Apostles, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That the Lord does not mean Israel in the ordinary sense, is clear from chap. xxviii. 19, and the Acts of the Apostles i. 8, according to which the mission of the Apostles was to "all nations." The sphere of their rule in the kingdom of glory cannot surely be narrower than that of their mission during the days when the Church is in its militant state. We may adduce, as a parallel passage, Apocalypse xxi. 14, which tells us that, on the foundations of the walls of the new Jerusalem, of the city in whose light the heathens walk, and into which the kings of the earth bring their glory, are written the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. That the limits of the rule of the Apostles are coincident with those of the dominion of Christ Himself, we learn also from Matthew xx. 23, which informs us that those who are preferred amongst the Apostles shall sit on the right hand, and on the left hand of their Lord. If the dominion of Christ be not restricted to Israel in the ordinary sense, neither also can that of the Apostles be thus restricted.

Even in his choice of the Apostles, our Lord was influenced by this idea of the identity of Israel and the Church. There can be no doubt that in choosing exactly twelve Apostles Christ had in view the number of the tribes of Israel, and that He meant the Apostles, in virtue of their being twelve, to represent Israel. And as we know certainly that the

mission of the Apostles was quite as much to the heathen as to the Jews, it is evident that, in the eyes of the Lord, the Church of the New Covenant was Israel.

St. Paul teaches us, in Romans xi., that from the beginning to the end there exists but one olive-tree, one people of God, one Israel. The unbelieving descendants of the patriarchs are broken off from this olive-tree; the heathen are graffed into it, and have perfectly equal rights with the natural branches. They become "partakers of the roots and of the sap of the olive-tree." Nor, when the unworthy "sons of the kingdom" are converted, will they receive anything more, or anything less, than the heathens who have believed. They are "graffed into their own olive-tree." In verse 18, Israel is represented as the root of the Christian Church.

In Romans ix. 6, 7, the Apostle lays down the principle that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children." As standing in direct and close parallelism with this distinction amongst the natural descendants of the patriarchs, to which our Lord also had already most plainly referred in John viii. 37, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, ye are of your father the devil," we may adduce the recognition of a spiritual posterity. If unbelief excludes, then must faith have the power of effecting an affiliation.

In Romans iv. 11, 12, the Apostle declares Abraham to be the father of all who believe, though they be not circumcised, and also the father of the circumcision, so far as they otherwise walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. Faith was the central characteristic of Abraham's nature. Those, therefore, who share his faith are his, that is, Israel's true sons, altogether independently of circumcision or of natural descent, which in this matter are not of decided moment. In verses 16 and 17 Paul represents Abraham as the father of all Christians, the father of many nations; and he bases his representations on the original promises recorded in Genesis—promises which need not, as Tholuck supposes, be "interpreted typically" in order to answer the Apostle's purpose, but do so when taken in their strict and proper sense; the words, in fact, allow of no other interpretation. The Lord says to Abraham, in

Genesis xvii. 4, "Thou shalt be a father of many nations," and in verse 5, "For a father of many nations do I give thee" (in both instances the word גוים is employed, signifying specially born heathens); and in verse 6, "I give thee to peoples, and kings shall come forth of thee." The watershoots, the sons of Abraham by nature, cannot be, in the first instance, here referred to. Only in Isaac should his seed be called. Ishmael was already born, when the promise was given which referred to the seed whose existence was still entirely a matter of faith. When the same promise as is here made to Abraham, is afterwards, in verse 15, made to Sarah, the sons of Kethurah are necessarily excluded. From Abraham, through Isaac, there sprang only a single nation, for we cannot of course include Edom, which was "not a people." Now the words, "many nations," in accordance with which *Abram* received the new name *Abraham*, "Father of the great multitude," cannot be supposed to refer solely to this one nation of the Jews. Hence there was nothing for it but that this nation should be largely extended and increased by adoption, that it should receive a "multitude of peoples" into its bosom. This conclusion is decidedly confirmed by that other parallel original promise, "in thee shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed" (Genesis xii. 3). "They, together with their kings, were to be graffed into the stem of the chosen race."* That the heathens who were to be received into the midst of the covenant people had as real an interest in the promises as the Jews, is evident from verses 12 and 13, which inform us that heathen servants could be incorporated with the chosen race by means of circumcision. Could this be effected by circumcision, then might it also, in other and altered circumstances, be effected by means of baptism—a rite differing only in form. On no other view could kings of *the nations* be said to spring from Sarah, as we are told in verse 16. In an ordinary and

* Noah's saying, also, in Genesis ix. 26, 27, leads to the same result, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem. May God give Japheth large room, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem." In the future, God will show himself to Shem as Jehovah and his God. The happiness of Japheth consists in his being received into the fellowship of Jehovah, who is to be found in the tents of Shem. Luther remarks, "Although Shem alone is the root and stem, yet will the heathen be graffed thereinto, as a strange branch, and partake of the sap and strength which is contained in the elect tree."

natural way only the kings of *one* people could be said to spring from her.

To the Corinthians Paul writes, "Ye know that ye were sometime heathens" (1 Corinthians xii. 2); and nevertheless, he says in chapter x. 1, "*our* fathers were all of them under the cloud." He thus designates the Israelites of the Mosaic period the fathers of the believing Christian heathens of Corinth. In his view, therefore, all Christians are incorporated with Israel. He reasons on the same principles also, when, in verse 18, he describes the Jews (not the Old Testament people of God, but the Jews of his own day,) as *Israel after the flesh*, in contrast to the true, spiritual Israel, which continues, in the Christian Church, the existence it already had under the Old Covenant.

According to Ephesians ii. 12, the heathen when they come to Christ, are incorporated with the commonwealth of Israel, become "fellow-citizens of the saints," that is, of Israel, (chap. ii. 19.)

"Know ye therefore," writes Paul in Galatians iii. 7, "that they which are of faith, the same are children of Abraham:" and in ver. 29, he says to born heathens, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We read in chap. vi. 15, 16, "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the *Israel of God*." "Peace be on Israel"—this, the form of blessing employed in Psalm cxxv. 5, is here applied to the Church of the new Testament, by the Apostle. And why? Because he regards it as the legitimate continuance of Israel. Compare further Colossians ii. 11, and Philippians iii. 3.

That which is written in Exodus xix. 5, 6, concerning Israel—"ye shall be a property to me out of all nations. And ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation,"—is applied to the Church of the New Covenant by St. Peter, when he says, "ye are the chosen generation, the holy nation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people," (1 Peter ii. 9;) by Paul in Titus ii. 14; and by John in Apocalypse i. 6, and v. 10. The Church, consequently, is considered to be the true Israel, beside which there is place for no other.

James addresses his epistle to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad, to the Israel outside of Palestine. He had not to do with Jews, but with Christians: and he regards the great majority of Jews as "false seed," as members of Israel merely in appearance. He wrote to churches which were composed of Jewish and heathen Christians. There were no other Churches in the Diaspora. The heathens also he considers to be members of "the twelve tribes," inasmuch as, although not participators in outward circumcision, they possessed the "circumcision of the heart," (Romans ii. 28, 29,) and because they were spiritual, if not fleshly, sons of the Patriarchs. We may make the same remarks in connection with the superscription of the Epistle of Peter. He addresses his readers as "the elect strangers scattered abroad." This was a designation which belonged to the Jews of the Diaspora. Without hesitation Peter applies it to Christians, the true Jews. That the Churches did not consist even mainly of Jewish Christians is sufficiently proved by chap. iv. 3, 4. Were the superscription to be understood in a Jewish sense, the letter would have been addressed, not to Jewish Christians, but to all the Jews of the Diaspora. It is not allowable, as might be suggested, to distinguish between the *strangers* and the *Diaspora:* both must be used either in the Christian, or in the Jewish sense. We should judge the character of the Church to be heathen-christian, from 1 Peter iii. 6, also, where the Apostle, speaking to the believing women, says, "ye have become the daughters of Sarah." On which Bengel remarks, "Ye have *become*, not, ye are; for he speaks to heathens who had become believers." Here also, there lies at the foundation, the idea that the Christian Church is the true seed of Abraham, the true Israel, that the unbelief of the seed of Abraham and of Israel excludes, whilst faith incorporates, and that the Jews are only the Israel which is after the flesh, Israel merely in appearance.

The "hundred and forty and four thousand who were sealed out of all the tribes of Israel," (Apocalypse vii. 4,) cannot refer to Israel in the common acceptation of the word. For the plagues against which those were ensured who underwent the sealing, are inflicted on the *whole earth*, and threaten equally all those who, according to chap. v. 9, 10, are redeemed by

the blood of Christ, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and are made kings and priests to their God; but nothing whatever is said to indicate that the Jewish Christians were to be special participators therein. How strange, then, if the seer should receive consolation for only a part of those who were threatened! If all were in tribulation, comfort should be, and is, in fact, afforded to all. According to ver. 3, the servants of God in general are to be sealed, and to understand by them only Jewish Christians is simple arbitrariness." The hundred and forty and four thousand are mentioned again in chap. xiv., and there unquestionably they represent the entire host of Christians:—they are redeemed from the *earth*, from the whole human race. Those to whom we are introduced *here*, as preserved on earth, are set before us in verses 9-17, enjoying their heavenly blessedness. They are "a multitude whom no man can number, of *every nation, and tribe, and people, and tongue.*" And, be it remarked, the expression, "a multitude which no man can number," is one characteristically used to denote Israel or the Church, (see Genesis xiii. 16; xv. 5: Numbers xxiii. 10.) To say, then, that they cannot be numbered, is equivalent to calling them Israel, as in ver. 4.

That the idea of Israel was completely one with that of the Christian Church in the view of the author of the Apocalypse, is evident also from chap. xxi. 12. According to this passage on the gates of the city, which typified the Church in the kingdom of glory,—the city, namely, in whose light the heathen walk, (chap. xxi. 24.) into which all who overcome are received without distinction of nation, (chap. xxi. 7.) and from which, without distinction of nation, all are excluded who work abominations or do a lie, names are written, which are the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

So much, therefore, is certain—that in the view of the Scriptures, the Christian Church is the legitimate continuation of Israel. We are strengthened in this conviction when we find that v. Oettingen's assertion—"only individual members of the natural Israel had gone over to the Church of Christ; consequently on the whole and in general, it was a community of heathen Christians,"—may be shown to be unsupported by historical evidence. In point of numbers, the Jewish converts

formed a very considerable part of the early Christian Church: in point of influence they had so decidedly the predominance, that they stamped on the whole Church a character which it has retained in all ages. From them, for example, did the Church learn to speak the language of Canaan, (Isaiah xix. 18.) Of their number, at all events, were the twelve Apostles, whose names still stand on the foundations of the New Jerusalem, whose writings still continue to be the light on the path of the Church, and who, in the regeneration, will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The high priestly prayer of Jesus, which alludes to the Church on earth as already founded (John xvii. 6-8,) although not a single heathen had as yet been converted, brings clearly to view the fact that Israel is the root of the Christian Church. After the crucifixion of Christ, the crowds which, before, had cried out, "crucify Him, crucify Him," struck by His superhuman dignity, smote their breasts, and bewailed the dead One and their crime, (Luke xxiii. 48.) Therewith began a glorious movement, which led great masses of penitent Jews to the Christian Church. The centre of this movement was the first Christian Whitsuntide, (Acts iii. 15 ; iv. 4.) Its magnitude we may learn also from Acts v. 14, "But there were the more added, such as believed on the Lord: a multitude both of men and women." In Acts xxi. 20, we find the elders in Jerusalem saying to Paul, "thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe;" on which Bengel remarks, "in the case of all these, circumcision went by degrees out of vogue, and, without doubt, a great part of them mixed with the heathens which had believed. So large a proportion, therefore, of the seed of Abraham, was not lost during so many centuries, as one might be disposed to imagine." Paul says in Romans xi. 7, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest are hardened;" but the emphasis must by no means be laid merely on the last clause; we must fix our attention quite as strongly on the election which had attained to redemption. To contrast the spiritual with the natural Israel, on the ground of the misunderstood passage in 1 Corinthians x. 18,—a passage whose explanation must be sought in Galatians iv. 29,—would be quite at variance with the facts of history. Micah's prophetical words, "the remnant

of Jacob shall be in the midst of many, as a dew from the Lord, and as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth upon the sons of men. Yea, the remnant of Jacob shall be among the heathen, in the midst of many people, as a lion amongst the beasts of the forest, as a young lion amidst a flock of sheep, which no one can keep off; when he goeth through them he treadeth down and teareth in pieces," (chap. v. 6, 7,) were completely fulfilled in the beginnings of the Christian Church. At that time the election of Israel proved itself a lovely and quickening power in the midst of the nations, and at the same time, also terrible and irresistible. This latter characteristic served the purpose not merely of a curse on their stiff-necked despisers, but also of a blessing to such as were estranged from the kingdom of God through ignorance. Then also were the words of Isaiah in chap. lxvi. 18, 19, completely fulfilled—"the time shall come to gather together all heathens and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will give them a sign, (a token possessed by the messengers of God in evidence of the spirit and power,) and I will send those that escape of them into the nations, to Tarshish, Phul and Lud, that draw the bow, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the heathen."

The Christian Church being then the legitimate and proper continuation of Israel, to it must belong most of the promises which, superficially examined, are supposed to furnish a pledge of the future salvation of the Jews. They have already found their fulfilment in the victorious career pursued by the Church through all past centuries, in its irrepressible tendency to spread out, to the very ends of the earth, in the spirit of reformation by which it is swayed, and in the light which arises to it ever afresh out of the darkness:—in a word, these promises are being every day fulfilled before our eyes. It is a sad denial of the grace vouchsafed by God to His Church, to refer the glorious promises of Scripture almost exclusively to the future, not to be able to follow out the hidden traces of divine blessing, both in the past and the present, to fail to discern in the Church the true Israel, and in its place to dress up an Israel of the fancy out of the Jews, to speak slightingly of the Church, and contrast with it that kingdom of God which is

first to come when the Jews are converted. This is one of the many subjective aberrations of the present day, which must vanish as soon as the Church has been awakened to a sounder estimate of its position and privileges. Indeed, one might prophecy the downfal of these opinions from the circumstance of their late origin: they have against them the consentient voice of all the various sections of the entire Christian Church.

A recent writer has said, "It is not to be denied that, for the Church as a whole, the Old Testament is of comparatively little use;" but then, by way of set off, we can console ourselves with the thought, that we are a community formed of heathens, (see "Weiss agung und Erfüllung," by Dr v. Hoffinan, I. S. 46): and that is the necessary consequence of setting the Jews in the place of the Church of Christ. But the apostle teaches us, in 2 Timothy iii. 16, that "all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. That a man of God may be perfect, fitted to every good work." The Scriptures of the Old Testament, to which those words primarily refer, must have been differently interpreted by him who could speak in such a way.

It cannot, however, with all this, on the other hand, be denied, that the promises primarily given to the Israel of the Christian Church are, at the same time, fitted to awaken and sustain hopes concerning the Jews. Indeed, they give rise, if not directly, yet indirectly, to such hopes. If the Christian Church is no new institution, but simply the continuation of Israel, and if it has such glorious promises, we must naturally expect that the physical descendants of the Patriarchs, who are converted, will not be limited to the comparatively scanty number hitherto brought in, but that they will yet attain to greater importance in the kingdom of God. That great weight is laid upon them, we learn from the history of the Patriarchs. Isaac's birth is there the central feature of the narrative. The long details given concerning the birth of the sons of Jacob, show that quite another importance attached to the physical posterity of the Patriarchs, in relation to the kingdom of God, than attached to those who should be received into Israel from the heathen world. Through long centuries the proselytes from the heathen were merely of secondary importance. Specially

to the physical descendants of the Patriarchs belonged, in the first instance, "the sonship, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law, and the service, and the promise," (Romans ix. 4). In proof of the abiding importance of that connection with the Patriarchs, which is after the flesh, our Lord sent back the Canaanitish woman with the words, "I am not (primarily) sent, save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and left her to secure for herself an exceptional position by her heroic faith. In Matthew x. 5, 6, the Lord says to the apostles, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into cities of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:" and in the same spirit Peter says to those who were Jews by birth, "Unto you *first*, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts iii. 26). Paul also says, in Acts xiii. 26, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, to you is the word of this salvation sent:" and in verse 46, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken unto you." Our Lord designates the descendants of the Patriarchs, "Sons of the kingdom," *regno proximi*, those to whom the kingdom of God primarily belongs. Stiff-necked impenitence must of course end in the loss of these prospects. The Lord saith, in Matthew xxi. 43, "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and be given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof." This "people" is the true Israel, the "election" mentioned by Paul, into which the believing heathen are brought by affiliation. We cannot, however, suppose that, during the age of the apostles, a final decision had been arrived at on this matter. All the means of grace were not then exhausted. The crushing of hardness is a work of centuries. Even under the Old Covenant great differences are discernible. After the exile the nation was much more susceptible than before. Then the words of the earlier prophets, which for many long years had been spoken to the wind, fell into hearts rendered susceptible by trial. Even on the strictest scriptural view of human nature, it appears scarcely possible to account for the extent of the hardness of the Jews, unless we suppose it to be the work of destiny as well as the result of guilt, unless we assume that God, in righteous retribution, has hitherto kept back from

them the full treasure of his redemptive influences, to the end that they may first be thoroughly humbled, and then be brought back, to prove a blessing and not a hindrance to the kingdom of God. Our expectation is, that the main assault on their hardness of heart remains still to be made in the future.

These, however, are but probabilities and conclusions, which, however commendable in themselves, want still the seal of confirmation. If they are sound, then must the Scriptures contain such a seal of confirmation in the shape of declarations, which directly bear on the future salvation of the Jews. Such declarations exist, and although their number is but limited, they are so clear as to leave no room for tenable doubts. The declarations of the New Testament furnish the only satisfactory groundwork for the understanding of those of the Old Testament, and therefore we should in fairness begin with the former. To ground our hopes of the future merely on the latter, is to surrender the Church to the Jews. No one can think of doing so who understands the general relation in which the New Testament stands to the prophecies of the Old Testament: that part of them which was not fulfilled at the first appearance of Christ is taken up again by the New Testament writers, and treated both most carefully, and according to a thoroughly digested plan. Such an one recognises the rule—that whatever hope for the future does not recur in the New Testament, can be found in the Old Testament only by means of a false method of interpretation.

Now, first, do we see the great importance of the words spoken by the Saviour on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." There can be no doubt that they referred, not merely to the Roman soldiers, but to all who, either directly or indirectly, were concerned in the crucifixion, and specially to the Jewish nation, which had delivered up the Lord to the Romans (John xviii. 35). As Christ always prays according to the will of God, we may judge that, behind the prayer, "Father, forgive them," there lay hidden the assurance, "the Father will forgive them." It is of great importance also to mark the ground on which the prayer is urged—"for they know not what they do." We must examine it in connection with the declarations of the New Testament regarding the sin against the Holy Ghost, and, above

all, in the light of the words of the Lord in Matthew xii. 31, 32, "wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word, (or doeth anything, for the restriction to speaking was entirely owing to the circumstances in which Christ was then placed,) against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." A characteristic feature of him who sins against the Holy Ghost is, that he knows what he does. This sin consists in a man's intentionally hardening himself against the truth, which the Holy Ghost presents to him, by means of an inward and most efficient action on his mind. Individual Jews had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, and knew what they did. We see this in the example of Judas, who was more than a mere separate individual,—who represented a class. We learn the same thing, further, from Matthew xii. 31, 32. The Lord uttered his warning concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost in the presence of those who were on the point of committing it, or, who were already half involved therein. The account of such men is already closed: it were better for them had they never been born; for they can never attain to salvation, and there is nought before them but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall destroy those who resist." In regard, however, to the mass of the nation, the Lord, the heart-searcher, gives us the comforting assurance that they know not what they do, that they have not committed the unpardonable sin, that the Holy Spirit has not yet exhausted all his means of influencing them, that their sin is predominantly one against the Son of man. Therewith also is directly connected the pledge, that the powerful aid of the Holy Spirit will be rendered unto them, and the duty laid upon us, of interceding for them; inasmuch as their sin is not that "sin unto death," concerning which the Apostle writes, "I do not say that ye shall pray for it" (1 John v. 16.) In connection with the declaration of the Lord, we may take the words of the chief among the Apostles in Acts iii. 17, "And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your

rulers." The Old Testament prepares the way for the New Testament doctrine of the sin against the Holy Ghost, by distinguishing between sins which are committed in ignorance or weakness, and presumptuous sins, that is, such as are committed with a high hand. For the former, it was possible to make atonement by sacrifices,—under the New Covenant, by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ: he, only, who sinned with a high hand was destroyed from his people; "for he had blasphemed the Lord, and despised the word of the Lord" (Numbers xv. 27-31).

A still more solid ground of hope is laid by the declaration of the Lord in Matthew xxiii. 38, 39, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The Lord spake these words, just as he was on the point of quitting the Temple for ever. The Temple was Israel's house, the whole nation dwelt therein spiritually with the Lord, and was tended by Him with a fatherly love and care:—such is the view to be found in almost every part of the Old Testament (compare, for example, Psalm xxvii. 4, xxxvi. 9, lxv. 5, 84.) In token of this same thing, the Israelites were obliged to assemble themselves outwardly before the Lord in Jerusalem at the great yearly festivals. Spiritually considered, the house became desolate at the moment when the Son of God left it; for the departure of the Son implied the departure of the Father also. From that hour the temple was a spiritual ruin, notwithstanding that it continued to retain its outward grandeur. Nor, when the spiritual desolation is accomplished, can the external fail soon to follow—it must come in its time, at no distant day. Daniel, in chapter ix, prophesied that outward ruin would follow in the train of the destruction of the Anointed One. It is the manner of God to throw down mere appearances in His Kingdom, to destroy visibly that which is spiritually a ruin:—for example, the secularization of monasteries, followed on their degeneracy into worldliness. Even in Ezekiel (see chapter xi. 23) the glory of the Lord is represented as going up from the midst of the city, ere the implements of punishment are employed. That which was then effected by the agency of the Chaldeans, the Romans were now destined

to accomplish. But destruction is not the final end and aim of God's dealing with the people of His choice. From this time forth, they shall not see him, until they say, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord." In this is clearly implied that at some future day they will speak thus; and that, by necessary consequence, they will see Him, whom to see, is the only source of redemption. The Lord put intentionally, into the mouths of those who should turn to Him, the words with which the multitudes had once welcomed His approach (Matthew xxi. 9). That cry had originated in an inward drawing towards the true King and Redeemer:—the fact testified to the existence of such an impulse—an impulse which has been constantly bursting forth afresh, from the furthest background of consciousness, even in times of the deepest darkness. However long it may be kept down by powers and influences opposed to God, it will at last make way. Bengel remarks with perfect justice, "He does not add *again*, ('they shall say *again*, Blessed &c.') although the people had once already thus hailed his approach (Matthew xxi. 9.) For they had not all cried unto him thus, and those who did cry to him understood not what they said, as Israel will one day understand:—for this reason they retracted their words almost immediately. Formerly they spake feebly, insufficiently: the next time they will speak worthily of the name, to which their words refer."—That the *seeing* here referred to is such as may take place before the second coming of Christ is evident from the Lord's own words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Such are the brief but pregnant hints given by the Lord:* "the Jews will be converted; the Father will forgive them;

* Some have found an allusion to the future conversion of the Jews in those words of our Lord, Matthew xxiv 32; Mark xiii. 28; Luke xxi. 29), "Learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." "The fig-tree occurs elsewhere as a symbol of the Jewish nation, and it is used so here." "The sudden conversion and collective deliverance of Israel will be a sign—a prognostic of the end" (see v. Oettingen, p. 203). But however much this interpretation may commend itself at first sight, it cannot be regarded as well-founded. One consideration alone decides against it, namely, that the entire discourse of the Lord refers *primarily* to His coming to judge Jerusalem; as verse 34, explained naturally, expressly informs us. Moreover the Lord himself forbids such an explanation, by saying that he

and they will attain to a participation in Christ and his salvation." Less is said than many might perhaps desire; but all is promised that a rightly disposed heart can long after. There are no privileges; there is nothing that can give fresh occasion to say, "thus doeth he not to any of the heathen"—a saying which must be entirely forgotten under the New Covenant. However hard it may be for the old Jewish man, Christians ought to give no encouragement to its claims. A full share in the precious redemption gained for the whole world by the blood and death of the Saviour is open to the Jews; but nothing more.

These hints are further carried out in the properly *locus classicus* on this subject, namely, Romans xi. And we may remark, by the way, that the Holy Scriptures are furnished with such *loci classici*, around which other utterances may be grouped, on all important subjects.

The Apostle shows what hopes may be entertained for the Jews, firstly, from the nature of the case, and from facts which are within everybody's reach, even though they are not favoured with peculiar enlightenment. It is of course implied that there is divine enlightenment in the background, furnishing a pledge that we have not to do with a mere chain of human reasoning, to which we may perchance oppose one that is still more acute. Then, in ver. 25 ff, he comes forward with the prophetical aspect of his Apostolical vocation, and in the form of a revelation of a mystery, he announces the final conversion of Israel. This latter, is evidently the main feature of the whole development; other considerations on the contrary are, at the best, but secondary: for, in the course of his revelation of the mystery the Apostle treats solely and entirely of the conversion of the Jews; whereas in his previous argument he, at the same time, directed attention to the blessed consequences which were to result to the Christian Church, as a whole, from that conversion.

The argument drawn from the nature of the case, is concentrated in the propositions—"If the first fruit be holy, then is the lump also holy: and if the root be holy, so also are the

only refers to the fig-tree by way of *comparison*. That the fig-tree comes under notice simply in its quality of *tree*, is evident from Luke xxi. 29, "Behold the fig-tree, and *all trees*."

branches holy:"—"if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive-tree." The Apostle starts with the assumption, that the covenant with the Patriarchs *primarily*, though by no means exclusively, concerned their physical descendants; that to them, first of all, must be offered the means whereby they may become true members of the true Israel, of the Church, and partakers of salvation. He presupposes that this offer, of which the grace displayed towards the sons by adoption forms a new pledge, has not yet been made in its most efficient shape: and considers it unquestionable that, once made, it will have results of a cheerful and important kind.

But the Apostle does not content himself with simply announcing the conversion of the Jews:—in order to dispose the heathen Christians to be very mild toward the Jews, he points out what a happy thing for the whole Church their conversion will prove. This he does in two propositions:—ver. 12, "if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and their damage the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness;" and verse 15, "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving be, but life from the dead." The words, "how much more," of the first proposition are *logical*. They teach us that between the conversion of Israel and the riches of the heathen, there is a much more inward and necessary relation, than between the rejection of the former and the riches of the latter. It is not an increase of riches that is announced: it is not that the conversion of the Jews will be a source of still greater blessing to the heathen, than their rejection. The emphasis in verse 15, rests on both the words "rejection" and "reception." Surely we are not to imagine that this "life from the dead" is higher than that highest thing which it is at all possible to utter, to wit, the *Atonement*: the idea must rather be, that a more inward and necessary connection exists between the "reception" and the salvation of the world, than between the "rejection" and the salvation of the world. From chapter vi. 13, where the Apostle writes to the Christians in Rome, "commit yourselves to God as those which are alive from the

dead," and from Luke xv. 24, "this my son was dead and is alive again," we learn what to understand by the expression "life from the dead"—we learn that it is a spiritual re-enlivenment, and awakening. In Apocalypse iii. 1, we read, "thou hast a name to live, and art dead." Verse 12 of the chapter under consideration tells us in a general way, that the conversion of the Jews will be a source of great blessing for the heathen Christians: verse 15 describes more carefully the kind and mode of the blessing. It will consist in this—that the life from the dead to which the Jews awaken, will exert an awakening, a quickening influence on the whole Church. There is nothing whatever in the words of the Apostle to lead us to conceive of the Church as having, up to this point, been totally dead, or of this life from the dead as the only one. Even in Churches whose life is most energetic, there always remains much that is dead, that needs reviving. Their most living members have ever much that is dead in themselves. Together with wise, there are also the foolish virgins, who become weary and fall to sleep, when the bridegroom delays. And therefore, when the Apostle distinctly says that life from the dead will issue forth from the conversion of the Jews, he neither denies those awakenings which it did not lie in his present purpose to consider, nor shows any intention of assigning them a subordinate position. He does not in general speak comparatively. It was sufficient for his purpose, that the conversion of the Jews would prove in a high degree beneficial to the whole Church, and that connected with it there would be a grand awakening. And here we may remark, that a glorious "life from the dead" must precede the conversion of the Jews. This conversion can only be regarded as the product of a deep awakening in the Church, which is mainly constituted of Heathen Christians, whose own fire will, in consequence of this event, be made to burn still more fervently. God's method is not to work directly, or so to speak specially, in his kingdom: He always works on men by means of men. Christians are not made except by Christians. But all doubts are excluded by the consideration that the prophetical announcements of the Old Testament not only represent the Jews as the instruments of God for the conversion of the heathen world, but also the converted heathen

as the instruments by which the restoration of Israel will be effected. But to this end they must needs first be made alive from the dead; for only life can produce life.

In the course of his revelation of the *mystery*, Paul says, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel,"—(compare verse 7, "the election obtaineth it; the rest are hardened")—"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel will be saved." From this we see that the "life from the dead," which Israel's conversion is to effect, will manifest itself within the compass of the Christian Church, principally in the awakening of its outward members, and not in missionary work, carried on amongst the heathen by the restored Israel. Indeed, of this latter kind of activity nothing is said in Old Testament prophecy. The conversion will be first effected, when the fulness of the Gentiles is already brought in. When it is said, that all Israel will be saved, we are not of course to suppose that every individual Jew will attain to the salvation of Christ in an inward and living way. Such a view would necessarily lead to the unscriptural doctrine of the restitution of all things; for if one nation were capable of redemption as a nation, it would involve the like capability in the whole human race. It is further at variance, both with the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins; with the words of our Lord, "Enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction; and many there be that walk therein. And narrow is the gate and strait the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it;" and finally, with the passages which treat of the sin against the Holy Ghost. In face of these facts, it is not enough to say, that the Scriptures use the word *all* "with a certain limitation, either expressed or implied;" as, for example, in Genesis vi. 13, "The end of all flesh is come before me;" and afterwards, in the account of the plagues of Egypt. A more thorough limitation is necessary than is afforded by the assertion, that a decidedly superior majority may be described as *all*. Such a limitation as we require is at once suggested by the observation, that, as previously, the "fulness of the heathen" did not signify the entire number of individual heathens, so here, by "all Israel," we are to understand, not every individual, but the national community as such. The idea is, that hatred of Christ will

cease to be the animating principle of the nation as a nation; and that, on the contrary, Christ and His Church will become the centre and focus of its life. Similarly, it is remarked by Philippi, in his commentary on this passage (see his *Römerbrief*), "the σωτηρία here consists in the objective divine act, of receiving the people of God again into the theocracy. This will extend, without exception, to the whole nation. Means and powers, for the subjective conversion of all the individuals received into the kingdom of God, are thus potentially established, and, as may be foreseen, they will operate on by far the greater number of the people. Love, that hopeth all things, sets no limits to the number of the converted. Elsewhere, also, the apostle characterises entire Christian communities as ἁγίους; we might therefore say, looking only to the invitations of God's word, and the gracious influences given in the sacrament of baptism, at the present day, that the whole of Christian Europe, as distinguished from the unbelieving Jews in its midst, have become participators in σωτηρία."

With respect to the time when the conversion of Israel will take place, the apostle has not expressed himself distinctly. That it must be after the termination of the present course of the world, is evident from the circumstance of the previous bringing in of the fulness of the heathen. It may, however, be assumed, that the close of the present historical development, which is now, with rapid strides, drawing nigh, and the commencement of God's work among the Jews. will meet and touch, and that both, for an indefinite period, will advance together. Dr. Philippi concludes, with perfect justice, from verses 12, 15, where blessed results for the entire Church, for that Church which consists chiefly of heathen Christians, are represented as flowing from the conversion of the Jews; that after this conversion "a new development in the kingdom of God will be initiated."

Having ascertained the existence of such decided testimonies to a future conversion of the Jews in the New Testament, we may go to the Old Testament, with the expectation of finding this hope of the Church clearly and distinctly expressed: nor are we deceived in our anticipations. There are many passages which cannot be referred to the Christian Church as the legitimate continuation of Israel, although it is the principal object

of the prophetical proclamations, but concern rather the physical posterity of the Patriarchs.

The subject of the second part of the Song of Songs, from chapter v. 2 to the end, is, "first, the offence against the heavenly Solomon, and the judgment; then the repentance, and the re-union which is effected, with the co-operation of the daughters of Jerusalem; that is, with the aid of those same converted heathen nations to whom they themselves had previously brought salvation. Hereupon the old relation of love is fully re-established, and, in consequence, the daughter of Zion takes up once more her position in the centre of the kingdom of God. In contrast to the instability of the earlier, the new and later covenant of love is set before us as inviolable." At present, however, we can only just allude to the testimony of the Song of Songs. Before a decided stress can be laid upon it, the Church must be stirred up to the formation of a more settled judgment respecting the interpretation of that book.

But Isaiah lxvi. 18-20 is a passage of brilliant clearness. With the threatenings which he had uttered, the prophet connects the calling of the heathen, by way of suitable contrast to the rejection of a great part of the covenant people. Then, in verse 20, he adds: "And they shall bring all your brethren, out of all nations, for an offering to the Lord, upon horses and in chariots, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." The subject to the verb "bring" is the heathen, to whom the message of salvation had been proclaimed. These, having themselves attained to salvation, bring, as an offering to the Lord, the former members of His kingdom. They then, and not the heathen who had believed, are described throughout the second part of Isaiah as *brethren*. Salvation passes first from Israel to the heathen, and then returns from the latter to the former.

With this declaration, in which Isaiah takes up again the announcement of chapter xi. 12,—"The Lord setteth up an ensign for the nations, and assembleth the outcasts of Israel, and gathereth together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"—is connected the proclamation of Zephaniah: "Then will I turn to the people a pure lip, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with

one shoulder. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia shall they bring my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, for a meat-offering." The pure lip of the heathen nations is put in contrast to the impure lips with which they had hitherto called upon their idol gods. The scattered members of the congregation *beseech* the Lord to receive them again into His fellowship, and this their cry cannot remain unheard, because they who utter it are closely related to the Lord ; because, although enemies in regard to the Gospel, they are beloved according to election, and for the fathers' sake (Romans xi. 28). "The daughter of my dispersed," is the daughter, or community, which consists of the dispersed of the Lord. By this description alone we are led to think of the dispersed members of the old congregation, for only they could be designated "the dispersed of the Lord." Add to this the reference to Deuteronomy iv. 27 : "The Lord shall *scatter* you among the nations" (chap. xxviii. 64)—which threat, at the time of Zephaniah, had already been executed on the ten tribes, and was soon to begin to be executed on Judah. In the symbolism of the Mosaic law, the presentation of a meat-offering signified zeal in good works, which is the characteristic sign of the saved. One result of this zeal is the missionary work, in which the heathens are here represented as engaging.

After the return from the Babylonish captivity, prophecy once more underwent rejuvenescence in Zechariah. In chap. xi. and in chap. xiii. 7 he displays a clear knowledge of the crime which, at a future day, Israel will commit against the good Shepherd, who is connected with the Lord by a secret unity of nature, and in whom the angel of the Lord manifests himself; but, along therewith, he announces also Israel's repentance. The prophecy, extending from chap. xii. 1 to chap. xiii. 6, falls into two parts, of which the one (chap. xii. 1-9) describes the victory obtained by the people of God over its enemy, the heathen world; and the other, the conversion of the sons of the kingdom.

We read in verse 10, "And I pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they look to me whom they have pierced, and they mourn over him as one mourneth for his only son, and they are sad for him as one that is sad for his firstborn." Ver. 11, "In that day shall there be a great

mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." Ver. 12, "And the land mourneth, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart." Ver. 13, "The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart." Ver. 14, "All the families that remain, apart, and their wives apart." Chapter xiii. 1, "In that day will there be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness."

There can be no doubt that the fulfilment of this prophecy does not belong entirely to the future. We learn from Luke xxiii. 48, that it began to be fulfilled immediately after the crucifixion of Christ. The multitudes which, a short time before, had cried, "crucify Him," struck by the proofs of Christ's superhuman dignity, smite on their breasts, bewailing him who is dead and their own crime. Then began a grand movement, which ended in great multitudes of penitent Israelites being received into the bosom of the Christian Church. That, however, is not all; nor is it enough to refer to the supplications of the Jews who, in every century of the Church's existence, have sought and found in Christ a fountain for sin and uncleanness: such cases form rather only the necessary *prelude* to the real and comprehensive fulfilment of the prophecy. For the prophet puts forth every effort in ver. 11-14, to depict the mourning as most widely diffused and most intense in its character. He compares it with a mourning of former days,—with that most painful sorrow, which was experienced by the whole nation, at the death of the pious King Josiah. Then he names two of the principal tribes, and, in order to indicate that the conversion will be a thorough one, going from the beginning to the end, he further specifies two of the chief families of these tribes, associating with them all the rest of the families. Thus did he express the idea of the totality of the nation, and declare, with Paul, in another form, that "all Israel" should be saved.

Such are the hopes for the Jews which the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament afford us. Everything else gathers round the declarations of Him who said, "Heaven and

earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," as round a centre. A visible support for these hopes some have in all ages found in the fact that the Jews have been kept through so many centuries and so many dangers, whilst all their neighbouring nations have utterly disappeared. Joh. Gerhard, for example, in his exposition of the grounds for a future conversion of the Jews, says—"To this must be added, that of the oldest nations the Jews alone have been preserved, notwithstanding their manifold fates, captivities, and scatterings, and have been separated from all peoples by religion and a certain form of civil constitution. All which appears to imply that they are reserved for a distinguished conversion and display of grace in the future." The fact is undoubtedly a very remarkable one. They, however, have gone too far who have found a prediction thereof in the words of the Lord—"Verily I say unto you, this race shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled," (Matt. xxiv. 34). To understand by "this race," the Jews, is the effect of an exegesis in embarrassment, such as surely ought not to exist at this late period. The explanation which first suggests itself, "this generation," suits the circumstances of the time admirably—there were then still forty years to the destruction of Jerusalem: it accords with the principal Old Testament passage on this subject, Habakkuk i. 5, where, in reference to the Chaldean catastrophe, that type of the Roman destruction, which again was a type, a microcosm, of the judgment of the world, it is said, "I work a work in your days:" it suits verse 35, where, after the time had in a general way been determined,—that is, whilst the generation lasted,—the exact point of time is described as hidden. We must not forget to notice that verse 36 does not speak of *time in general*, but more precisely of the day and hour.

But the preservation of the Jewish people is not the only visible support. In all ages, hold has been furnished to the hopes of the Church, and a prelude to their fulfilment, by the remarkable individual conversions of Jews which have taken place. During the Middle Ages a Lyra and a Paulus Burgensis did the Church excellent service by their gifts in the interpretation of Scripture: and a Hermann von Kappenberg adorned it by his genuine piety. But our own century

furnishes unexampled support of this kind. Many facts lead us to expect that the way is being prepared for the revelation of the mystery proclaimed by the Apostle. The power of Judaism is broken. It is crumbling to pieces before our eyes. The more earnestly therefore is the Church admonished to lay these promises to heart. It is not a question of destinies which will be accomplished without its co-operation. According to prophecy the exalted work of bringing back the Jews is entrusted to the daughters of Jerusalem, the heathen nations whose conversion went forth from Jerusalem: and now that the time is approaching they should prepare themselves for commencing their work.

Having now exhibited those hopes for the Jews which are warranted by the Scriptures, let us now go on to consider more carefully those which are *unfounded.*

III. EXAMINATION OF TEACHINGS UNSUPPORTED BY SCRIPTURE.

We have shown that the Church builds on the sure foundation of the Word of God when it hopes for the future conversion of the Jews, and expects that event to exert a mighty influence on its whole life. We propose now to show that whatever goes beyond these hopes, as cherished by the Christian Church, with few exceptions, in all ages, is of men's invention, and based on incorrect interpretations of the Word of God. Although our task is now mainly a negative, destructive one, it is no less important, provided we hit the mark, than the positive, constructive one. It is said in Deuteronomy vi. 2, "*ye shall not add* unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." That which is here said primarily in regard to the commands of God, is expressly applied to prophecy in the Apocalypse (see chap. xxii. 18). The members of the Church are thus most emphatically warned to be on their guard against any fancies of their own in respect to their hopes of the future.

The opinion which we have to test by the Word of God is

the following:—that the Jews will be received into the bosom of the Christian Church not as individuals, but will be converted as a nation. Dr. Baumgarten has even gone so far as to maintain that whereas all other nationalities will perish, the Jewish will again gloriously revive and flourish; and that the Jewish nation will return to Canaan and there enjoy the richest physical blessings. In Jerusalem, splendidly restored, the temple is to rise afresh with its sacrificial rites, and to form a centre for the entire Christian Church. From the national and social life of Israel, whose centre is the temple, and in which divine and human, spiritual and natural elements commingle and interpenetrate, joy and life will stream forth to all nations.* "To the people of Israel belongs, once for all, the destiny to be receiver and mediator of divine revelations.—As a priest is related to the people, so is the kingdom of Israel related to humanity:—it is the medium of its relations to God.—Ever since they were rejected divine revelation has been dumb.—Hence, if revelations are to begin again in the kingdom of the thousand years, converted Israel must once more take up its position at the head of mankind. What the glorified priest-kings are in heaven, that is the Israelitish priest-kingdom on earth.—Paul is the Apostle of the heathen, and he devoted his whole life to their conversion. Yet even he regards the time during which they predominate in the kingdom of God, and Israel are excluded, merely as an *interlude* in the development of the divine kingdom."†

Our first inquiry is,—In what relation does the *New* Testament stand to these views, so peculiar, and so unheard of in the Christian Church for many centuries? The attempt has naturally been made to bring proofs from it, in their favour: in our opinion they will not bear a strict scrutiny. "The Lord Himself," says Dr. Delitzsch,‡ "opens up the prospect of the restoration of Jerusalem in Luke xxi. 24, and when the disciples asked him at what time he would restore the kingdom to Israel, He refused to reveal to them the exact time, but did not deny the fact," (Acts i. 6-8).

* Baumgarten, "Commentary on the Pentateuch," vol. ii.

† Auberlen, "Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis," S. 346-47, 355.

‡ "Bibl. Proph. Theologie," S. 124.

In the former passage (Luke xxi. 24) we read, "And Jerusalem will be trodden down of the heathen, until the times of the heathen shall be fulfilled." We ought not, with Prof. Auberlen, to understand by the "times of the heathen," the time of the heathen-Christian Church, at whose close Jerusalem shall fall to the lot of the converted Jews. The whole context shows that the "heathen," can be no other than the heathen nations, which are *inimical* to the kingdom of God—not those which are christianized. This is evident, both from the "treading down," and from the fact that the heathenish Romans made a commencement thereof when they took Jerusalem. The *times* of the heathen can only be the times during which God suffers the heathen to tread down Jerusalem. They will come to an end, either when the heathens are converted, according to the announcement in Romans xi. 25, that "the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought into the kingdom of God;" or, when their power has been overthrown by the Divine judgments, and a Christian dominion established in its place. By way of prelude, the treading down of Jerusalem by the heathen (amongst whom, from the biblical point of view, must be reckoned the Mohammedans) has already twice ceased—once under Constantine, and once in the time of the Crusades, when a Christian kingdom existed at Jerusalem. On the ground of this saying of the Lord, we expect a final and definitive realisation of that which was thus temporarily brought to pass. Jerusalem will once more be brought under Christian rule:—this event, pledged to us by the word of God, historical events have made it now easier to expect than ever it was before. The "sick man" is himself more and more giving up all hope of life, in sign of the severity and hopelessness of his disorder. Intelligent travellers testify that the Turks are possessed by a conviction that their day is nearly at an end. But we hear not a single word of Jerusalem delivered being given to the converted Jews, of its taking up a position in the centre of the world, and of the temple being erected anew. Bengel, who altogether took the right view of the passage, remarks, with perfect justice, "It does not teach that the temple and its shadowy service will be re-established: there will, notwithstanding, at that day, be many Christians there, as, indeed, many are there now; and they will be of the people of Israel."

Jerusalem will undoubtedly become the portion of Israel; but of the Israel of the Christian Church.*

In the second passage, adduced by Dr Delitzsch, namely, Acts i. 6-8, the apostles ask the Lord, after His resurrection, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? But He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power; but ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you, and shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth." "At His departure, the Lord promises his disciples, first the Church, then the kingdom;"† but not a word is spoken concerning the Jews. What the apostles, who had not yet received the Holy Ghost, understood by Israel, may be a matter of indifference to us. In any case, the Lord puts into the term Israel the higher scriptural idea and meaning which it bears throughout the New Testament. Israel is the Christian Church, consisting of the one stock of believers of the ancient covenant people, into which believers from the heathen are received, who, though spiritually dependent on the original sap and roots, yet enjoy the full rights of citizens. To gather together this Israel from the Jews, and from the whole heathen world, is the next great task. Then, in due time, will the kingdom be bestowed upon Him,—that kingdom of glory, described in Apocalypse xxi. and xxii., without any trace of a preference of the Jews.

Prof. Auberlen finds also in Matthew xix. 28, an allusion "to an earthly Israelitish, though not a fleshly, kingdom of glory," and draws from the passage the conclusion that, "Jesus, like all the prophets and apostles, was a Chiliast."† We have, however, already shown that the expression, "twelve tribes of Israel," which the Lord employs, is not a designation of the Jews, but of the entire Christian Church. Even if his words referred to the "kingdom of the thousand years," it could not involve a reference to the Jews, for there is no allusion whatever to them in the *locus classicus* concerning that kingdom.

* The absurd undertaking of Chr. Hoffmann and others in Würtemberg, ought not to have been met by the objection, that only born Jews are destined to the possession of Jerusalem. Sound exegesis is decidedly in their favour.

† Auberlen, S. 357.

But we are not warranted in assuming that the Lord's words did refer to the "thousand years' kingdom." Even Bengel says, "the promise given to the apostles *looks beyond*." The *regeneration*, that is, the restoration to the condition depicted in Genesis i., the complete frustration of the consequences of the fall, presupposes the disappearance of death and sin,—both which are represented as continuing during the "thousand years' kingdom." The passage in question directs attention to the days of the New Jerusalem, *after* the "thousand years' reign," (see Apocalypse xxi. 2), to the new heaven and the new earth, (see chap. xxi. 1), to that which is signified in the words, "Behold, I make all things new," (verse 5). To the Lord's mention of the twelve tribes of Israel corresponds that of Apocalypse xxi. 12. The glory promised to the apostles is manifestly a lasting one, such as can only be realised in the New Jerusalem. Or are we to suppose that the apostles will again descend from their thrones at the end of the thousand years?

Prof. v. Hoffmann (see his *Schriftbeweis* ii., 2, s. 76) urges that, notwithstanding the rejection of the Jews, Christ calls Jerusalem "the holy place" (Luke xxi. 20; compare Matthew xxiv. 15), even at the very moment when he was speaking of the judgment with which his people were to be visited. But the designation, "holy place," is never elsewhere used but of the *Temple*, and, following the principal passage, Daniel ix. 27, we can think of nothing else in Matthew xxiv. 15. The parallel passage in Luke furnishes no evidence in favour of Jerusalem: the Lord had given *two* tokens of the impending destruction, an internal one, recorded by Matthew, and an external one complementarily added by Luke. Moreover, not a word is said implying that the Temple will continue to be sacred after the destruction: on the contrary, the holy place, having been internally desecrated by the "abomination," must of necessity be destroyed, and outwardly profaned.

Importance has also been attached to the fact, "that immediately after giving an account of the crucifixion of Jesus, Matthew calls Jerusalem the *holy city*,"* (Matthew xxvii. 53). But he does so, evidently not because of its future importance, but because of the great events of which it had been the scene

* v. Hoffman, S. 77.

in the past. Had not Jerusalem been, shortly before, the theatre of the most glorious doings in the history of the world? We might, with the same fairness, conclude, from Peter's designating the mount of glorification "the holy mountain," that this mountain will, at a future day, be glorified; or, from the mention of Horeb, the mount of God, in 1 Kings xix. 8, judge that in the future God will once more reveal Himself on Horeb. The ancient Jerusalem is even yet the holy city, in the eyes of such as direct their expectant gaze solely to the *New* Jerusalem.

Peter is asserted to have had in view "the glory of an external kingdom,"* when he said, in Acts iii. 19-21, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, which before was offered unto you; who must take possession of heaven, until the time of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." But the "times of refreshing" are identical with the "regeneration," spoken of in Matthew xix. 28; and the one has as little to do with the "thousand years' reign" as the other: still less has the passage anything to do with the supposed "glory of the kingdom of Israel." That the detailed description thereof is given in Apocalypse xxi. 22, is as certain as that its advent is set forth as contemporaneous with the reappearance of Christ. Were we to suppose it to precede the "thousand years' kingdom," Christ would be besieged in the "beloved city" by Gog and Magog (Apocalypse xx. 9), and we should be compelled to imagine a second Passion. It is not to be forgotten, that when Peter represents the inauguration of the glorious future of the kingdom of God as "dependent on the repentance and conversion of Israel," he is addressing Jews. They are to do *their* part towards rendering possible the blessed appearance of Christ. The same thing holds true of the heathen. Their conversion also must precede the second coming of Christ.

It is thought that, when St. Paul says in Romans xi. 26, "there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer," he takes up arms "against those who wished to have the physical Zion

* Auberlen, S. 355.

regarded only as the commencing, and not also as the final scene of the New Testament redemptive revelations."* But what appropriateness would there then be in the expression *out of* Zion? On the modern theory, the Jews are not to be led back to Jerusalem till after their conversion. Then first shall Christ make his abode in Jerusalem. That the Deliverer is to come *out of* Zion, shows clearly that the physical Zion cannot possibly be meant. The more importance must be attached to the phrase, "*out of* Zion," as, by an alteration which all analogy would show to be intentional, the Apostle has inserted the words "out of" into the Old Testament quotation. Isaiah lix. 20, the passage to which the Apostle refers, reads in the original text, "and there cometh to (or, for) Zion a redeemer:" the Septuagint rendering is "on account of Zion." The Apostle could never have designed to give the Jews the high title of Zion, to the undervaluing of the Christian Church. He rather teaches that the true Zion exists in all ages, that it exists before the conversion of the Jews, and that salvation will come to the Jews, from the Saviour who is present in and with his Church.†

We have thus arrived at the conclusion that the New Testament does not contain the slightest allusion to the supposed "glory of the future kingdom of Israel." The importance of this result will be manifest, if we consider how frequently inducements presented themselves, to mention that future glory, if there were really a prospect of it. For example, when the Lord announced so emphatically the destruction of Jerusalem, saying, "Seest thou all these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left on another which shall not be broken," how easily might He have added a hint of its future restoration, were it really appointed to take place. It must especially surprise to find in Matthew xxii. 39, not a single word of the rebuilding of the house, but merely to be told

* v. Hoffmann S. 77.

† So even Fr. Junius, as quoted by Tholuck, "Paulus vero jam non dicit venturum Sioni, venerat enim, sed pro ratione temporis, venturum ex Sion, *i. e.* ex ecclesia, sua ut *Judæis* beneficiat," on which words Tholuck remarks, "if this view be correct, Paul's idea would be that the missionary efforts which are to produce such large results among the Jews will be put forth by the Gentile Church."

that they will see the Lord. The same remark may be made in respect to the proclamations of the destruction of Jerusalem. If the physical Jerusalem is really to become again, in the future, the place of salvation and blessing for the whole earth, how can we account for the utter absence of any hints of such an exaltation in the prophetic announcements of Christ? Further, in Romans xi, where the Apostle discusses most carefully the future prospects of the Jews, we naturally expect all essential points to be enumerated: and yet the Apostle says not a single word, of a new Church of the Jews, of the restoration of Jerusalem, of the rebuilding of the Temple, or indeed at all of a return of the former "beggarly elements." Great stress must be laid too on the silence of the Apocalypse. It is the book in which the Lord confirms His promise to reveal future things to his Apostles, recorded in John xvi. 13. It is the prophetic portion of the New Testament. The New Testament comprises no other prophetical book. In an unbroken line it passes on from the day of the Seer to the New Jerusalem. Its attention is directed not only to the outward fortunes of the Church but also to its internal state. The greater the stress laid on the "future glory of the kingdom of Israel," the more decidedly faith is demanded for it, so much the more impossible does it appear that complete silence should be observed in the Apocalypse concerning this return of the kingdom of God from its end to its beginning. Yet it is a fact that there is not the least hint thereof: and Vitringa remarks with perfect justice—"in this book there is no special mention whatever of the Jewish Christians in distinction from the heathen Christians, for the plain and simple reason, that under the new economy all national distinctions in matters of religion are abolished. Nowhere in the whole of the Apocalypse can we find prophecies which affect the Jews, so far as, in matters of religion, they are opposed to the heathen." What Prof. Auberlen has said in explanation of this silence, conceded even by him, to wit, that it was intended for a heathen-Christian age, "that it was a handbook of travel for the Churches gathered from the midst of heathens, that Israel has already Daniel and the other prophets," is certainly not sufficient. For, on the one hand, the only prophetical book of the New Testament could not pass over in silence that most

important of all catastrophes; and, on the other hand, the prophecies of the Old Testament may not be transferred to the Church of the New Covenant without further consideration—they need elucidation, and must be first stamped with the seal of confirmation. The word of God, which is a light to the Church in all its ways, could not surely leave it to itself and its own fancies in so extremely important a matter as this. We are no more warranted in deducing hopes for the future from the Old Testament alone, than we are in deducing dogmas. But on examining the prophets of the Old Covenant more narrowly, we discover, as the silence of the New Testament must lead us to anticipate, that they also know nothing of the "future glory of the kingdom of Israel," in the sense which is at present in such high favour.

We need not, however, appeal merely to the *silence* of the New Testament. It contains a series of express testimonies *against* this idea of the "future glory of the kingdom of Israel."

The first testimony of importance is contained in the words spoken by Jesus to the woman of Samaria, who had asked of Him, as a prophet, light on the ancient dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. She says, "Our Fathers worshipped in this mount, and ye say, that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship;" and Jesus answered, "woman, believe me, the hour is come when neither in this mount, nor in Jerusalem, ye shall worship the Father. The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." With this utterance of the Lord, the idea that Jerusalem will once again in the future, acquire the position and importance of a centre, is irreconcilable. Christ's words put an end to the localization of the kingdom of God for the whole period of the New Testament. Bengel already clearly discerned this: he remarks, "the Samaritans were not under obligation to go to Jerusalem (Acts viii. 14); why then were the Crusades afterwards necessary? What purposes are served by pilgrimages? That distinction of place, of which the ancients were so observant, is here utterly abolished. If any distinction at all remains, these words direct us to worship anywhere, rather than in Jerusalem."

This declaration of the Saviour, setting, as it does, Jerusalem and Samaria on the same level as regards their relation to his Church, would have been found objectionable by the friends of the "future glory of the kingdom of Israel," had it proceeded from any other lips.

In view of Peter's words to the Christians, "you are the chosen people, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people" (1 Peter ii. 9); and knowing that he assigns to them all the privileges, which Moses specially promised to Israel in Exodus xix. 5, 6, it is incomprehensible how any one can venture, on the ground of the latter passage, to claim for the Jews of the future, the priestly office in the kingdom of God, and exalt them to the rank of a spiritual nobility. Such an opinion, moreover, clashes with the Old Testament, in its bestowal of priestly functions on the converted heathen (Isaiah lxvi. 20), and in its express declaration, "I will also take of them for Levitical priests" (ver. 21). Professor Auberlen, who even goes so far as to compare the difference between the converted Jews of the future and heathen Christians, to that between the man and the woman, has certainly not done justice to these words of the Apostle. Nor does past experience afford any support to such an expectation. The prophets and apostles, the men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, must not be adduced without further consideration. Such a course would lead to a dangerous mixing up of the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of God. From the Apostles down even to the present day individual converted Jews have rendered excellent service to the Church, and have not a little strengthened our hope and confidence in that "life from the dead" which Paul connects with a more general conversion of the Jews: but we search in vain for Jews who should cast into the shade such men as Augustine, Bernhard, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas à Kempis, Luther, and Scriver. Nothing loftier than that which these men embodied in life, can be expected from poor mortals. "The Israelitish kingdom of priests on earth" cannot but be "laden with inborn sin, weakness, want, and death," as well as with much else that will unavoidably accompany, into its new sphere of life, a nation that has, for long centuries, been alienated from the truth to which it then submits. That these centuries have not passed

away without leaving traces behind, that the Jews are not now in the condition in which they were at the time of the Apostles, that they can only be elevated by degrees through the purifying influence of the Christian Church, is proved clearly enough by our experiences in connection with the great majority of proselytes. We should find ourselves very much deceived if we expected them immediately after their conversion to take their stand as the model of a Christian nation, as a priestly race, fitted to represent the entire Church before God. Eminent individuals are not wanting, men of peculiar worth and gifts, who exert a deep and wide influence on the Church, not only of one country, but of many countries. On the whole, however, Zephaniah's words will remain true, "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and small people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

The words of the Lord in Matthew xxi. 43, "therefore say I to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you, and be given to a people which bringeth its fruits," afford little prospect of a new and glorious Israelitish kingdom. He represents the period, during which born heathens constituted but a subordinate element of the kingdom of God, as near its close. He affirms without limitation that the kingdom of God is destined to be transferred to the new community, in connection with which the wild branches of heathendom are grafted into the good olive-tree of Israel. If this is to be "a mere interlude in the development of the divine kingdom," we should surely expect a hint thereof even in this place, and, of course, elsewhere, clear and distinct information thereanent. Whereas, neither is the case. The statement here is to all appearance a definitive one: and not a hint is contained in Romans xi. of a mere "interlude." The apostle represents the Jews as being grafted again into the olive-tree, but with no other rights than those of the heathen who have their full share of the roots and of the sap.

Decisive, further, against a future restoration of the physical Jerusalem, are all those passages of the New Testament in which Zion and Jerusalem are employed, in the spiritual sense, to designate the Church. They plainly imply that the day of the physical Jerusalem is for ever gone by. Their significance is all the greater, from this mode of speaking about

Zion and Jerusalem being so clearly defined, and so frequent throughout the whole of the New Testament. We have already considered Romans xi. In Galatians iv. 26, the apostle contrasts the Jerusalem which is above, the Church of the New Covenant, whose proper seat is in heaven, because there dwells its head, and there also have its citizens their citizenship, (Philippians iii. 20), with the "Jerusalem that now is." In Hebrews xii. 22, we read, "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem." In the Apocalypse, Jerusalem is never used as a designation of the city commonly so called: it is invariably a designation of the Church, partly as in its present condition (see chap. xx. 9, where "the beloved city," is no other than Jerusalem), and partly as in the state of perfection to which it is destined to attain (chap. iii. 12; xiv. 1-5; xxi. 2, 10). How unnatural then to force in a renewal of the old physical Jerusalem, between the spiritual Zion of the present course of the world, and the spiritual Zion of the future—that city which cometh down from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Thus to direct again our looks to the earthly Jerusalem, after that, through the word of God, such modes of looking at things have been naturalized, and have struck deep roots among us, is surely to build up again that which had been destroyed. Instead of this, we ought to rejoice and be thankful, that we are made free from the earthly Jerusalem and everything connected with it.

It is inconceivable also that the *Temple* should be rebuilt, now that, under the New Testament, it has taken a spiritual character. To re-erect the temple would be an anachronism: and, in such a case, we might apply the words of the apostle, "having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" The way was prepared for this spiritualization even in the Old Testament. The tabernacle and the temple bore a symbolical character: they were the image of the kingdom of God amongst Israel. This is suggested even by the name of the tabernacle; it signified "Tent of meeting," the place where God came together with his people, had communion with them: further also by Leviticus xvi. 16, where all the children of Israel are represented as dwelling with the Lord in His tent: the tent therefore was nothing but a visible symbol of the

Church. In a long series of passages from the Psalms, the tabernacle and temple are said to be the places where believers dwell spiritually with the Lord. To the temple it was essential to be the only one. Only in such case could it outwardly represent the Church. It was equally essential that all the members of the congregation should present themselves personally every year in the temple. Under the New Covenant the symbol has cast off its corporeal garment. The temple now denotes simply the Church; and every one of the passages referred to has the force of an express declaration that the time of the outward temple has departed. Compare, for example, 1 Timothy iii. 15, "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to walk in the house of God, *which is* the Church of the living God;" 2 Corinthians vi. 16, "Ye are the temple of the living God;" Apocalypse iii. 12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out;" John ii. 19; Mark xiv. 58; 1 Corinthians iii. 17; Ephesians ii. 21, 22; 2 Thessalonians ii. 4; Hebrews iii. 6; Apocalypse xi. 1; xiii. 6.

We shall find it inconceivable that the restoration of the Old Testament sacrificial Cultus which some look for, should take place, when we properly weigh the words of Hebrews x. 14, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and of Hebrews ix. 26, "now *once* in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the one offering, the sacrifice of himself," (compare besides Hebrews x. 10). To except the sin-offering from the number of the other offerings is unallowable: for the Mosaic sacrifices were constituted into a system, into a regular and organic whole. Besides, the sin-offering is expressly and repeatedly mentioned in Ezekiel's description of the second temple, the passage on which the expectation of a restitution of the sacrificial Cultus is especially based (Ezekiel xlv.) If we depart from the letter of the description in respect of the sin-offering, there remains no ground for expecting that any outward sacrifices whatever will be restored. In other respects, too, such an expectation may be shown to be untenable. Why have physical sacrifices ceased of themselves in the Christian Church? Plainly because the inward life of the Church of Christ has become so much deeper that material sacrifices, as mere means of representing spiritual

processes, are too coarse, palpable, and clumsy. "Bullocks with horns and hoofs," (Psalm lxix. 31), would wear too strange a look in a Christian sanctuary. In the Catholic Church a material sacrifice is still retained; but how refined and delicate when compared with the sacrifices of the Old Testament! The same cause which led to the abolition of the Mosaic sacrifices, forbids their reintroduction. If they are permissible at all, why should they not be at once restored? We are now instructed to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," (Romans xii. 1); to "offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," (1 Peter ii. 5); "to offer by Him, the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of the lips which confess His name," (Heb. xiii. 15). Such are the true burnt-offerings and thank-offerings binding on the Christian Church in all ages: and consequently, even the bare *idea* of a restoration of that material Cultus which suited the beginnings of the kingdom of God must be treated as an anachronism. In one aspect, the sacrifices of the Old Testament were but a "shadow of things to come," (Col. ii. 17; Hebrews x. 1), "weak and beggarly elements," (Gal. iv. 3, 9), which have found in Christ their realization, and have consequently come to an end: in another aspect, they were a form which is no longer suitable, a symbolical means of representation, which has lost its power over the soul, and which would now serve rather to vex, than edify.

These are the reasons drawn from the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, which forbid us taking up with the notion of a future glorious kingdom of Israel. But its advocates consider that the strongest arguments in its favour are to be found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Professor Auberlen says, "the doctrine of the glorious re-establishment of Israel in Canaan, after severe chastisements and deep humiliations, is so essential and fundamental a thought of all the prophecies, that one is puzzled, not so much to find passages in its support as to make a due selection."

Dr. Tholuck, on the contrary, in commenting on Romans xi. 25, (see the edition of 1856), remarks, "How did it happen, that the Apostle, who is said to have started with the same idea, should have been satisfied with adducing two pas-

sages which are both questionable, and do not at all belong to the class referred to, instead of drawing with a full hand? Why, instead of opening up the Scriptures which to the Jews were dark, did he give utterance to his mystery in the manner which he adopts elsewhere, when coming forward himself as a prophet, and only afterwards quote the prophetic passages in proof?"

Is it an unnatural thing that in the prophecies the Church should appear under the name of Zion and Jerusalem, which had been for so many centuries the seat of the kingdom of God; or under the symbol of the temple which had outwardly represented that kingdom in the day of the Old Covenant? How deeply it lay in the character of prophecy to employ symbols, we may learn from passages such as Hosea xii. 11, where, in the course of an enumeration of the benefits which the Lord had bestowed on His people since the day that He brought them out of Egypt, it is said—"And I multiplied visions, and through the prophets I speak in similitudes:" and Ezekiel xvii. 2, where the prophet is commanded to "put forth a riddle." If we have the right to insist on the letter, in every place where Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned, what shall we say when we find that the prophets speak of the misery which should be experienced by the people of God before their salvation, under the symbol of a *desert* (Hosea ii. 16, 17; Jeremiah xxxi. 2); and of the removal of the obstacles to redemption, as a second leading through the Red Sea (Isaiah xi. 15; Zechariah x. 11)? If we insist that the re-establishment of Israel and their leading back to Canaan spoken of by Isaiah (see chapter xi. 12), must be understood in a physical sense, then must we keep to the letter also in verse 14, "And they fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west; they plunder together the sons of the east; they lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; the children of Ammon obey them." But then we contradict verse 4: for the subjects of such a king as is there described, are not directed to make war after the manner of David. We contradict further the prophetical anticipation cherished by Isaiah with special distinctness, that before the appearance of Christ, the neighbouring nations alluded to, would be ground to pieces by the great powers which should arise, and would lose all their previous import-

ance. Is God to restore the Philistines, the Edomites, and other such nations before the end of the days, in order that the converted Jews may wage a successful war with them, employing not the sword of the spirit, but of the flesh? Meyers would, no doubt, unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. For does he not say (page 126), that "although the twelve tribes are now mixed up, each will stand at that day distinct before the Lord." Others, however, will find a difficulty in going so far astray.—The impossibilities attendant on such a literal interpretation of Ezekiel's description of the new temple, must be plain to every one. In order to carry out this view, we must follow the example of the rationalistic interpreters, and change the "reeds" expressly mentioned by Ezekiel into ells.—Besides, are there not passages in the prophecies where Zion is unquestionably spoken of in a figurative sense? For example, Zechariah ii. 7, "O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon, deliver thyself," where those members of the covenanted nation are addressed, who dwell far away from the physical Zion, in the land of the heathen: and Isaiah xl. 9; xlix. 14, where we read, "Zion, saith the Lord, hath forsaken me," whilst at the time to which the prophet's words refer, the physical Zion lay in ruins.

On the literal view of the passages which allude to the future glory of Zion and Jerusalem, we fall into extravagances which a sound exegetical tact feels to be foreign to the spirit of the holy Scriptures. As, for example, in Isaiah ii., where, literally interpreted, Mount Zion is to be established on the top of the highest mountains of the earth; and Zechariah xiv. 10, according to which all the mountains of Judea, with the single exception of Jerusalem, are to be levelled to plains.

Such a mode of interpretation involves us in contradictions. For example, according to the literal view of Isaiah lxvi. 23, in the age of Messiah, "All flesh will come to Jerusalem to worship before the Lord, from month to month, and from Sabbath to Sabbath;" which is impossible, notwithstanding all our railways and steam-boats: and this is at variance with chap. xix. 19; Zephaniah ii. 11; Malachi i. 11; "in *every place* (1 Timothy ii. 8) is incense offered to my name, and a pure offering."

By the literal view we are driven, further, to the dangerous

result of transferring the fulfilment of most of the prophecies entirely into the future: and an interpretation of the prophecies, which ignores the past eighteen hundred years of the Church's history, cannot possibly be the right one. The natural course for prophecy is to take first the more immediate future into view. This law is universally observed in the prophecies which relate to the times of the Old Covenant. In Isaiah, for example, Babylon forms only the background; Assyria, the great power of the present and the immediate future, occupies the foreground. History has decided against the literal view. The separation of the Church from the physical Jerusalem and Zion has been accomplished; and prophecy therefore cannot mean what it is said to mean.

Most of the prophecies which are adduced as favourable to the notion of a future glorious kingdom of Israel, belong to the pre-exile period: and they have the less force in this connection, having been already outwardly fulfilled in the return of the Jews from exile. Not that they have ceased to be of force in consequence of this fulfilment; but that in the age of New Covenant they will be fulfilled in another form. "Not the form, but the substance of the divine inheritance, did the prophets regard. Under the New Covenant, now that the whole earth is become a Canaan, the form is different; the substance, the reality, remains. To cling now to the form is as absurd as it would be for a man, who had left all for Christ's sake, to demand a literal fulfilment of His promise, that he should 'receive a hundredfold, houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children, and lands' (Mark x. 30). The words of God, which are spirit and life, must be apprehended with spirit and life."

The passages which speak of a return of Israel to Zion in the age of Messiah, cannot be literally interpreted, if for no other reason, because they represent Zion as the *absolute* seat of the kingdom of God. Now, under the Old Covenant, it had this central importance only, because the sanctuary was located there; which, even Jeremiah prophesied, would lose its dignity as soon as Christ appeared (chap. iii. 16). When Christ came, another centre was given to the kingdom of God, — a centre to which the Temple is related, as the shadow to the substance. The same thing is true of passages which prophesy that the converted heathen will come to Zion, to inter-

pret which literally involves us in the inconsistency of maintaining, contrary to all appearances, that their fulfilment belongs altogether to the future. Isaiah (in chap. ii. and lxvi.), Micah, and Zechariah, all represent Zion, unconditionally, as the seat of the salvation of the heathen world, so that whoso fails to come to Zion cannot share in the blessings of grace, and is subject to the curse (Zechariah xiv. 17-19). According to them, from Zion proceeds the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and whoso fetcheth it not thence is shut out from its benefits: Zion is the only seat of worship on the whole earth, and, consequently, the only place where men can become partakers of God. These consequences it is surely incumbent on us to face, before adopting the literal view. The question is not whether Jerusalem is one day to be possessed by the converted Jews, and to gain an importance in relation to the entire Church, similar to that which once attached to Geneva and Wittenberg—to the one in relation to the Reformed, to the other in relation to the Lutheran Church. If the passages which treat of the future glorification of Zion are to be at all interpreted literally, they imply far more than that. It becomes a question, then, whether John iv. 21 is to lose its meaning, and the Church to give up its œcumenical character. A preference for literal interpretations leads at last to a revival, nay, more, to an outbidding of those Judaising errors which the Church has long ago overcome and cast out.

The history of the interpretation of Scripture does not help to prejudice us in favour of this view. It may lay claim to the excellence of believing more; but still we must not forget that it is essentially a *Jewish* believing, to which the Christian Church has been opposed from its very commencement, and that it led to the crucifixion of the Saviour. Nor is the name of J. D. Michaelis, who defended this mode of interpretation against the theology of the Church, a recommendation: still less the example of the most noted rationalistic commentators.

Having made these general preliminary observations, we will now examine separately those passages of the Old Testament which are chiefly adduced as favouring the expectation of a future glorious kingdom of Israel.

"Micah," says Dr v. Hoffman,* "who prophesies the destruction of the Temple, and the leading away of his people to Babylon, sees, at the end, Mount Zion exalted above all the other seats of power in the world, and his nation brought back into the land of their fathers" (chap. iv. 1, vii. 14). But he who should fail to see that the first of the two passages—"And in the last days it cometh to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and unto it flow the peoples. And many nations come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob,"—describes that streaming of the heathen into the Church, which began with the first appearance of Christ, must fight against plain facts. We have the fulfilment distinctly before our eyes, and therefore we cannot take the mountain of the house of the Lord to mean the material Zion. History raises its voice against such a course. But, independently of the actual fulfilment, the spiritual view is suggested by the very common use of mountains in the Scriptures as a symbol of kingdoms. Symbolically, therefore, the Temple-mountain would signify the kingdom of God in the midst of Israel. In favour of this spiritual view may be further urged, that the promised *exaltation* must inevitably be understood figuratively:—the thought then is, "the kingdom of God will, in the future, be exalted above all the kingdoms of the world." It would be not a little inconsistent to take the exaltation figuratively, and to understand by the mountain the natural mountain.

In the second passage, in chapter viii. 14, it is said, "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Gilead and in Bashan, as in the days of old." The impossibility of applying the promises of chapter vii. to the converted Jews of the future, and the necessity of directing our attention to the Israel of the Christian Church, are very clear in verse 12. We read there: "A day is it, when they will come to thee from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even unto the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain:" the idea is, the future dominion of

* "Schriftbeweis," S. 75.

the people of God over the world; and every attempt to appropriate that to a single part, which undeniably belongs to the whole, is fruitless. It is not enough that the people of God become free from the bondage of the world, as the prophet had previously hinted, but it will be the object of the yearning of the nations, even of the mightiest and most hostile, the magnet drawing them to itself. Of the heathen nations, Assyria and Egypt are first specially mentioned, because they had been in the past, and were then, the chief representatives of the enmity against the kingdom of God, and because they were the two most powerful empires at the time of the prophet. All limits are then taken away by the words, "from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain," which signify as much as "from every sea to every sea." Should we deny that these promises are being fulfilled in the history of the Church of Christ, and postpone them entirely to the future, we could no longer be far removed from the Jewish fancy, of a Messiah who is yet to come. Quite as clearly do verses 15-17 refer to the splendid victories of the Church of the New Testament. It would, indeed, be strange if the results already realized had been left out of sight: strange, in truth, if the "election," with the twelve apostles at its head, and all those who connected themselves with them, should have been ignored, and only those regarded who have hitherto remained hardened. Were such the case, prophecy would be a source of confusion to our minds. The following is the right view of chapter vii. 14, taken as it stands:—The idea of a sure and undisturbed happiness, of protection against those worldly powers, from which the people of God suffered so severely during the long and weary centuries before the coming of Christ, is clothed in forms borrowed from the earlier position and circumstances of Israel. The wood in the midst of Carmel is referred to as a protected spot: Gilead and Bashan as districts rich in pasturage.

Dr. v. Hoffmann says further: "When Obadiah and Joel promise good to their nation, they single out Mount Zion and Jerusalem as the place which will be a sure hiding-place from the judgments on the nations of the world, to those who dwell there."

The futuristic view of Obadiah 17-21, is set aside by the circumstance, that the Edomites, the Philistines, and the

Canaanites, have long ago disappeared from the stage of history: there is therefore no possibility of a literal fulfilment. Of the promise contained in verse 17, "And upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and it is holy, and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions," the fulfilment must be sought in the power of victory, which the Church has received through Christ. In this place also the world and the kingdom of God are set in opposition to each other. Judah and Joseph appear, not as a single section of the people of God, but as the sole people of God. Zion is set forth as the only seat of deliverance, and as the ruler of the world. Following the literal interpretation, we must deny the existence of one holy universal Church, and consider the Jews to be the rulers of the whole world.

In Joel, there is the passage chap. ii. 32, to be considered, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered; for on mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." With full justice Chr. B. Michaelis remarks here, "on mount Zion, and in the Church of the New Testament." We cannot in this case, adopt the literal view of Zion and Jerusalem, without endangering our belief in a holy universal Church. Jerusalem is represented as the only seat of redemption: outside of it is a world hostile to the kingdom of God, and obnoxious to the judgments of the Lord. When we consider the mode in which the prophecy of Joel is articulated, and examine the individual passage in its connexion with the whole, we see very clearly that Zion and Jerusalem must mean the Church. Threats of punishment against degenerate Israel extend to chap. ii. 17. Then follows the proclamation of salvation, as far as chap. iii. 2. God begins his manifestations of grace by sending a teacher of righteousness, Rich blessings, of which the climax is the outpouring of the Spirit, follow in his train. The remainder is occupied with a description of the judgments with which God will visit the enemies of His Church. In verses 30 and 31, the prophet tells us what omens will precede the great and terrible day of the Lord: then in verse 32 he points out the means which can alone thoroughly ensure our stand-

ing at that day. Finally, in chapter iv. he depicts the judgment itself.

It is further affirmed that "Isaiah is confident that at last, a holy people will dwell in Jerusalem" (chap. iv. 3). But that, in this passage, the Prophet employed Zion and Jerusalem, as being in his day, the centre of the covenant nation, to represent the whole, is evident from the reference made to the escaped of *Israel*, at the close of the second verse, which is here taken up again. With the first appearance of Christ began the fulfilment: and then the relation of the true, spiritual Israel to the world underwent an essential and fundamental change. Even in the apostolic age the word "saints," was applied to believers as a kind of proper name. The promises would be worth nothing, did not the beginning of their fulfilment coincide with the founding of the Church of Christ, and did they not continue to be fulfilled through all the centuries of its history.

Further, we are assured that "Jehovah's holy mountain, whither his scattered people will return from all the ends of the earth, is that place of peace, in which, under the rule of the second David, not even wild beasts will any more injure or annoy" (Isaiah xi. 9, 11). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," it is said in Isaiah xi. 9, "for the *earth* is full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The second clause of the verse, connected as it is with the first clause by "for," is not appropriate unless we understand mount Zion spiritually, and unless we conceive of it as the spiritual abode of all the inhabitants of the earth. That it represents the Church is evident from the relation between verse 9 and verses 6-8. According to these verses, all that is hostile and destructive in the irrational creation will be done away with. As even the reference to Genesis i. suggests, such an alteration will affect the whole earth. It is impossible, therefore, that that higher change in the rational creation, of which the lower is but the reflection, should be limited to a single spot.

We have thus arrived at the conclusion that the scriptural proofs of a "future glorious kingdom of Israel" rest on wrong interpretations. But there are also other important difficulties in the way of this theory

Great stress has been laid on the conversion of Israel as a nation: and great benefits are expected to accrue to the kingdom of God from a future development of the nationality of converted Israel. This lies at the foundation of all the rest. But suspicion of such hopes ought to be awakened by the bare fact, that the Christian Church has never, through all these centuries, dreamt of collecting the converted Jews into separate communities, or of keeping up the wall of separation between them and the heathen Christians. If that theory were correct, a sacred duty bound them to do so; and is it not extremely improbable, that it should have failed, through all these ages, in such a duty; that it should not only have mistaken, but have had no suspicion whatever, of its true course? But what is still more, we must then have expected to find in the New Testament express injunctions to this line of conduct. There are, however, no such injunctions whatever. On the contrary, St. Paul teaches so decidedly and emphatically the full abolition of all distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, that, if this theory were correct, his sayings would, to say the least, deserve the reproach of want of consideration. Thus would it have happened through the neglect of the Christian Church,—a neglect for which the Apostle Paul is primarily accountable—that the first fruits of the nation and its noblest members, to wit, those who since the days of the Apostles have been converted to Christ, have disappeared amongst the heathen Christians without a possibility of their being distinguished, that they have been cut off from connection with their nation, and have lost all the glorious prerogatives which belong to it. Their long continuance in unbelief will be an advantage to those who came last: for they will have kept pure their Jewish blood, and will, in consequence, be capacitated for participating in the royal and priestly glories which are to be bestowed on Israel. Is it not much easier to suppose that the decision of the Church in its best days was the right one, and that the future of the converted of Israel is to be judged according to their past? In favour of this view may also be adduced the unquestionable fact, that proselytes from Judaism, down even to the present day, notwithstanding that this modern theory meets them at so many points, and is so agreeable to their old Jewish man, manifest a decided

disinclination to unite together as Jews; that, the more sincere their piety, the stronger is their impulse, to become undistinguishable parts of the Christian Church, and to seek in it the remedy for those disorders which afflict them in consequence of their collective life having, for so many long centuries, been swayed by an ungodly principle.

Surely the advocates of Jewish Nationality can scarcely have formed a clear conception of that which they desire. *It was the grand privilege of Israel, not to be a nation in the usual sense.* From the days of its ancestor Abraham onwards, its nationality was rooted in the true religion, in the kingdom of God. To the very end, that the people of God might not have a nationality in the ordinary sense, the kingdom of God was not established in the midst of an already existing people; Abraham was called as an individual, and was then increased to a nation. The great deeds of God, and they alone, stamped on this people its specific character. Hence, the termination of its nationality, as a distinct and peculiar one, was involved in the coming of Christ. Then was the type of Jewish nationality stamped on all nations that entered into the Church of Christ. It thus attained, and is still, to the present day, attaining, its true glory. Unbelieving Jews fell away from their true nationality, and gathered themselves around a new centre, which was, hatred of Christ. This new nationality is destined utterly to vanish with their conversion: their original nationality has become the common property of all Christians. To attempt to constitute the Jews into a distinct nation, would end in the revival of the imperfect and beggarly forms, which in the course of its development, the Christian Church has already rejected.

Finally, the Lord admonishes us to observe the signs of the times: and they are anything but favourable to this modern theory. It would lead us to expect that the principle of Jewish nationality would become every day more powerful and active, that the people would be forming itself more and more into a separate whole. On the contrary, the nation is unmistakably crumbling to pieces. Were all social and civil disabilities removed, this result would follow still more rapidly. Even as things are, the process of dissolution is incessantly advancing, that only national tie, false faith, has lost its power

over their minds, wherever Jews have yielded to the tendencies of the age; and that which comes into vogue on the marts of life, soon and inevitably penetrates to its remotest corners. In circumstances like the present, any attempt to draw a contrast between the conversion of the nation as such, and the conversion of individuals, is unwarranted and vain. We are approaching nearer and nearer to the point when only Jewish individuals will exist. Every day the Jews participate more fully in the life of the Christian nations amidst which they have taken up their abode: and if the attempt were to be made to lead them back, converted or unconverted, to Palestine, we should have even now, though the process of decomposition is not complete, such a strange mixture of fragments of the most diverse nationalities, as would render the formation of a state impossible.

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